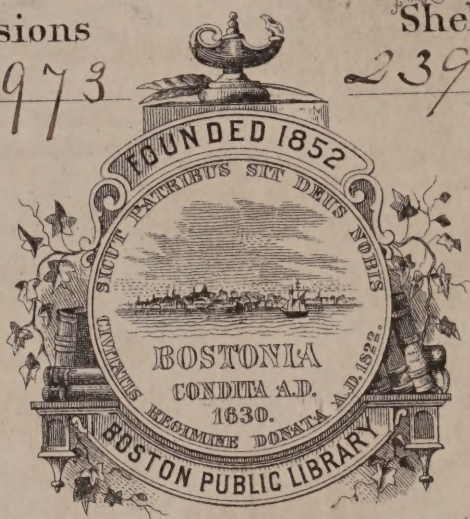


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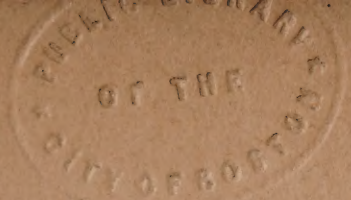
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LIFE.

"Inhaled their sweets, then dropped them by the way."



STRAY THOUGHTS

OR POEMS

BY

MARIA HILDRETH PARKER

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ERRATA.

The poems beginning with page 44 and ending on page 68, should have been grouped under the heading "Summer and Winter Musings," as they are continuous.

Dear Friends :

If but one of you find pleasure in perusing these "Stray Thoughts," I am well repaid; nor deem the time spent upon them wasted, or wholly a selfish pleasure.

MARIA HILDRETH PARKER.

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STRAY THOUGHTS.

LIFE.

AND is not life the same as when we trod
With youthful steps athwart the yielding green,
And plucked the new-born flowerets that we met,
Inhaled their sweets, then dropped them by the way
To free the hands e'en as the soul was free?
No earnest thought except in pleasure's cause,
To look, enjoy, alone the mind's intent.
Sweet nature's gifts adjunctive charms supplied,
And with the spring of bubbling joy combined
To make of life a rippling, sunny stream,
Its depths unstirred by philosophic oar,—
Content to float upon the crystal wave,—
And when the pleasures of the day were past,
A mother's teachings o'er our slumbers cast.

To older life on time's slow wheels arrived,
With knowledge vainer and a will more strong;
With keener pleasures, also keener pains.
Still happiness the goal we sought to win,
Uncertain of the road to lead us there.
Sometimes the world's applause was wildly sought;

STRAY THOUGHTS.

Then riches lured us with a dazzling light
To live in luxury, to gratify the taste
For art creative, comfort, elegance —
Each one by turns the plastic mind did sway,
Till love—the nat'ral bent of youthful thought—
Absorbed all other aims for future joy,
And wrapt us round with spell so sweet and fair
The all of earthly bliss we felt was there.

Such flights of fancy time doth sober down,
Binding the rosy moments into years,
All tempered to the calm possession gives,—
While present joys the mind ne'er satisfy;
And winged fancy ne'er again may spread
For us o'er earth a glamour charming, bright
As that inspired by love's first magic spell,
Brimming the heart with rose-light, tinging all
With Boreal beauty, all things glorified,
And moonlight even new-born radiance holding.
Starlight and sunlight gleam as ne'er before,
Above, below, a sweet enchantment reigning—
Short-lived, best known as "Love's young dream,"
And known but once on life's prosaic scene.

But what of it? while floating down the river
A calmer, more enduring joy possessing;
If fortunate, affection tried, steadfast,
Freed from the glamour, mystery,
Seeing the light that helps to guide our boat,
Feeling a strength united to our own,

Braving together the tumultuous waves,
Or sharing in the joy of peaceful flow ;
Yet conscious more and more as years roll by
How short the voyage, its terminus how near —
Knowing how soon both pain and joy will end,
Thinking at times that earth itself is changed,
As we may never feel and see again —
As when inspired by youth and love's first flame.

Unbidden sigh ; we give it to the past,
'Tis due to dream so sweet and vision fair ;
But if through sorrow or through love we've found
A strength above, beyond all human aid,
On which to lean and cast our woes and cares —

That strength is Christ.

And we may sail in safety down the stream,
Faith for our pilot, and heaven the port ;
With him, our star, our compass, friend and guide.
Earth's shocks or storms no more our bark may wreck,
And all its joys are naught to this sweet rest.
'Tis only then we truly learn to live,
And earth grows lovely as a dwelling given
To fit us for the joys and peace of heaven.

CHRISTMAS.

LITTLE hands expectant, waiting
For the morning light to break,
That the wonders in the stocking
Near the chimney they may take.
Christmas, happy Christmas!

How the eyes dilate with pleasure,
And the checks with roses glow,
As with eager hands their treasure
One by one they proudly show.
Christmas, happy Christmas!

Older ones in wisdom growing
Would the giver learn, I trow;
Smaller ones a firm faith showing,—
"It is Santa Claus," they know.
Christmas, happy Christmas!

Santa Claus, a myth so charming,
Let him have a natural reign;
Gilding childhood without harming,
Good rewarding, soothing pain.
Christmas, happy Christmas!

O'er the world the mind's eye casting,
Christmas morning, joyful sight!
Little hands thy favors grasping,
Basking in thy rosy light.
Christmas, happy Christmas!

Old and young awake, rejoice,
Celebrate the Saviour's birth;
Shout, exultant with one voice,
Every living thing on earth —
Christmas, happy Christmas!

NEW YEAR.

NEW YEAR, we greet thee; yet with distrust
As a friend we never have tried,
Who cometh with stores all hidden and deep,
With us for a time to abide.

Fair is thy visage, and cheery thy mien,
Thine eye has a clear piercing ray,
Can look through the long, dark vista of time
As well as the fogs of to-day.

What bringest thou? dark sorrow and care
We ne'er may forget thy dread reign;
Or peace, calm and sweet, with flashes of joy,
And a faith that can triumph o'er pain?

Fair offspring of time, so rosy with youth,
All over the face of the earth,
At least for to-day, let happiness dwell,
And let us rejoice in thy birth.

This morning the sun his diamonds showered
O'er snow-frosted hill-top and field,
The stars they did gain new lustre last night,
And the moon new burnished her shield.

Deal gently, O year, new hope lend the weak,
From ashes new blossoms uprear ;
Till quickened to life each slumbering sense
Shall hail thee as " Happy New Year."

THE CHILD'S PRAYER.

“NOW I lay me down to sleep”
 (To keep awake she tries ;)
“I pray the Lord my soul to keep,”
 (With dreamy half-shut eyes,)
“If I should die before I wake,”
 (While to and fro she sways)
“I pray the Lord my soul to take,”
 The baby girl, she prays.

She's climbed upon the bed, and kneels
 With palms together pressed ;
Repeats the words, nor knows, nor feels
 The meaning there expressed.
No matter — God will hear her prayer
 And blessings o'er her shed,
He loves the angel kneeling there,
 So sleepy on her bed.



CHILD'S PRAYER.

"She's climbed upon the bed and kneels,
With palms together pressed."

NIGHT VISIONS.

'T WAS midnight. A restless spirit sat
At the gate of sleep, refusing
The downy dove an entrance there
Till patience fled ; and losing
All hope of rest, my weary soul
No longer strove to banish
The unwelcome guest, but challenged him
To do his worst, to reign supreme,
And, when he chose, to vanish.

He chattered, " You think yourself so wise —
Blind mole in darkness groping,—
Canst warn another when too late
To shun a pitfall? Hoping
To raise thyself by empty words.
'If *this* course had been taken,'
Then stumble o'er the next mole-hill,
And think thyself blind fortune's fool,
By God and man forsaken.

" Now listen — a prayer breathed from the poor —
' O God, of hunger I'm dying,

Save, O save the wreck of thy hand
In want and misery lying.
Canst feel and rescue from the grave,
Or seek to soothe such sorrow?
Ah, no; 'bove all thou lov'st thyself,
And shun'st the haunts the wretched tread,
And liv'st but for the morrow.

“Remember when slander circling round
Till the air you breathed grew tainted,
Didst shrink from the envenomed tongue
Your neighbor's faults had painted?
You listened with a secret joy,
But showed a pious pity,
Till even thy erring soul believed
Itself possessed of charity
'Bove all the wicked city.”

Relentless, toward another theme
Each strained sense disposing,
And heard through voices strange and loud
Loved tones from dead reposing.
The words they spake were vague and low
Till painful the endeavor
To hear again one hallowed phrase
From those affection could not lose,
Though lost to sight forever.

“Christ, Saviour, O be merciful,
Grant to my heart's deep yearning
To hear one dear familiar word
From those to earth returning.”
Unto my wild appeal was heard
No words of yore replying,
But a voice rang knell-like on the air,
“Rest easy in the arms of time,
Fast to the grave you're flying.

“Mistaken that thy groans and sighs
Great wisdom's plans may alter;
Accept his laws, submission learn,
And let thy faith ne'er falter.
Forget thine own in others' woes,
And strive their cares to lighten,
Good works, like sunlight, clouds disperse.
Peace then shall reign within thy breast,
And all thy days will brighten.”

'Twas daylight. Welcome to my eyes
The sun in morning splendor;
Unpleasant dreams all fled away
Save those I would remember.
'Tis in the night with strongest force
Our keenest thoughts awaken,—
Sadness profound will overwhelm,
Short-comings, faith in earthly plans,
Misdeeds, conceit,—with ruthless hand
By conscience all are shaken.

'Tis then we feel our nothingness—

Our loves and rich possessions

We cannot claim, or call our own,

For He can take them all away

And also our transgressions.

Firm trust in *Him* our souls be given,

'Tis this alone that fits for heaven.

PAIN.

THE common foe of living flesh,
It lies in wait, and unawares
Waylays, till bends the stubborn will
To own its power, with groans and prayers,
As black and grim with talons firm
It holds the poor and helpless worm.

None may escape his cruel grasp
The blow tho' quick, and quick withdrawn,
To some he gives a passing thrust,
With others loves to linger long ;
Determined, fell, he settles down
Unmoved by pity's tear or frown.

By contrast only can we know
How precious is the boon of health ;
Relieved from pain each grateful sense
Will own it as its truest wealth.
And joys the purest felt or known
Must spring from suffering alone.

THE MORNING CONCERT.

A ROBIN red-breast plump and round
Sat on a fine ash tree ;
He cocked his head from side to side
And twittered joyfully.

The early rising sun disclosed
The beauty of sweet May,
Bedecked in robes so fresh and fair,
Greeting the opening day.

Amid the fine wrought foliage,
Clustering blooms of white
Were nodding gently in the breeze,—
Withdrawn the veil of night.

While on the tree there gathered now
A band of robins gay,
And such a twittering ne'er was heard,
Save on a morn in May.

Red velvet throats, all quivering
With joy that through them thrilled,
In gushing notes instinctively
Their beings law fulfilled.

It was indeed a pretty sight ;
The birds, the flowers, the tree,
Awake so early and attuned
To gladsome harmony.

The lessons we most dearly prize,
Are those from nature drawn ;
But many are there lost in sleep
At four on a May morn.

LITTLE EMILY.

BABY gone? our pride, our treasure,
Filling heart and home with joy,
Can we live without our darling?
Precious, living, loving toy!

How she caroled forth her greeting
When she heard our well-known tread,
Sprang into our arms and nestled
On our hearts her gold-flossed head.

Full of fun and mischief, laughing
With her eyes and coral lip,
Plucking beard, and fondly kissing
Mouth and nose the very tip.

And how sweet the infant lisplings,
Every word she tried to speak;
Papa, mamma — blue eyes brightened,
With affection glowed her cheek.

Mother — fountain of all pleasure,
As the bee to flower inclined;
There she gathered lasting sweetness,
There — the limit of her mind.

Full of life and never quiet,
Save in sleep (a blessed reprieve),
Little feet were never weary
Trotting round from morn till eve.

'Mong her dollies one was chosen,
Soiled and homely — but her pride;
Little mother — singing, rocking,
Clasping fondly to her side.

Will those little garments folded
Ne'er more wrap her baby form?
Little shoes with toes imprinted,
Rosy feet no more may warm.

We will keep them — clothe her shadow,
Till we know she has outgrown;
And in after years her spirit
Opes the gates to bliss unknown.

YOUNGER CHILDREN.

WE rear our children from the babe
That opes its eyes in wonder,
Yet neither thinks or understands
Whose charge or care he's under.
A helpless thing, yet bathed in love,
And watched with care unceasing.
The mother's being in it merged,
And father's pride increasing.

To older childhood's winning grace
Our hopes and struggles lending,
To make *our* child a theme of praise,
Our constant efforts bending.
Yet prone to overlook each fault
In this our darling treasure,
And willing e'er to sacrifice
Our *own* for his best pleasure.

Contented with the wayward love
To us alone belonging,
We shut our eyes to coming years,
New loves and schemes there thronging.

Yet all too soon a child no more,
On us no longer leaning ;
And love whose limit was *ourselves*
Has now *another* meaning.

We dwell upon the short-lived past,
His look is onward, saying,
"The universe was made for me,
And for my sweet one straying
Where lily bells present their dew,
And roses blush at meeting
A maiden fair and pure as they,"
Love's symphonies repeating.

He takes up life where we began,
But leaves no future blessing
So sweet as when with grateful hearts,
Our darling boy caressing.
Possessed with power to gratify,
Ne'er failed the blest endeavor —
Our tend'rest, most unselfish love
Lives with the child forever.

A DAY IN AUTUMN.

TRIUMPH of Autumn, thou perfect day!
I would forever in thy splendor lie,
Quaffing thy breath, thy pure elixir's play,
Content with thee to live, with thee to die.
With knowledge but to realize thy sweetness,
Absorbed my being, lost in thy completeness.

Throned in thy beauty, thou day of days,
The insects' song and hum increasing heard;
Perfect content blends with thy golden haze,
Thy sceptre peace, unbroken by a word.
On thy fair bosom, sweet day, I am lying,
Take, O take me with thee when thou'rt dying.

PARTING.

GO, and say nothing, if it must be so,
Name not the hour, I would not even know
That thou *must* leave, dear one, the hour or day —
As to thy daily duty, go away.

Parting! the very word a cloud will cast
Upon our present pleasure and the past.
Good-by to loved ones, be we strong or weak,
Is still the hardest word our lips may speak.

The hour draws near, all preparations made,
Choke back the tears — in brave outside arrayed,
Impart a courage for the dear one's sake,
His heart's grief lighten, tho' thine *own* may break.

Tho' oft repeated, no less hard we find
The parting hour, and more and more inclined
Adieux to shun, but for the hushed refrain,
"One dear kiss more, ye may not meet again."

But still all parting forms we will forego,
The day or hour I would not even know;
When you depart, go in the usual way
As to your daily duty every day.

THE LITTLE CHILD.

BE kind unto the little child,
You may not have him long;
The angels love to gather such
Unto the heavenly throng.

A harsh word makes the rosy lip
To quiver in its joy.
In heaven with its pure happiness
Is mingled no alloy.

The sweet May flowers and tender buds
That look up to the sky,
If *crushed* can only fade away,
But utter no reply.

The little child as helpless, too,
Save but to sob and weep;
Above, a record of its wrongs
The loving angels keep.

The rosy face and dimpled limbs,
So soft and sweet and fair,
If placed among the cherubim
Would lend new beauty there.

Grieve not the little tender heart,
Such precious gifts are given
To draw us nearer to their fold —
The sweetest part of heaven.

FOR LITTLE LOTIE'S ALBUM.

MY darling, the times are progressive,
No art or invention untried
To make little women of children —
Precocious in fashion and pride.
A sweet child of nature refreshes
Like violets grown in the vale,
In unconscious loveliness blooming,
Moved but by the dews and the gale.
Let *Nature*, my child, be your teacher,
Her works and her beauties your guide;
Your soul will be filled with true wisdom,
And pure as the rose by hill side.

THANKSGIVING.

'T WAS on a clear Thanksgiving morn,
Appropriate the weather,
Two little girls, with hand in hand,
Walked forth to church together.

The larger one but ten years old,
This morn seemed older, taller,
So much increased her consequence
As on she led the smaller.

To church the first time in her life,
Dressed up so cute and pretty,
What wonder that no little miss
So proud in town or city?

Her baby sister three years old,
As a long wished-for pleasure,
To-day mamma allowed to take
With her the youngest treasure.

The church within the suburbs stood,
Not far from their own dwelling;
The eldest, as they neared the door,
Now earnestly was telling

The younger that she "must sit still,"
Nor talk out loud — for playing
Was not allowed — the minister
Would stop right off when praying.

We see her perched upon the seat,
Her cheeks like roses glowing ;
Shy glances on the minister
And those around her throwing.

The eldest finds the hymn and tries
Like any nice young lady,
To look demure — but cannot keep
Her mind from off the baby.

The baby, bless her little heart,
Now on the preacher gazing,
Sits bolt upright with lips apart
Like some young cherub praising.

The preacher, spectacles on nose,
With zeal his text is reading,
In rising voice, and action strong,
To *her* a strange proceeding.

At length the little head it droops,
A watch the eldest keeping,
She shakes her gently, 'tis no use,
Her charge is soundly sleeping.

With crimson cheeks she lays her down,
And thinks that all are looking ;
She wishes she were safe at home,
Among the goodies cooking.

The sermon never seemed so long,
And dreadful slow time passes ;
When sudden — up jumps little one,
“Thanksgiving had on glasses.”

VALENTINE.

A GEM did shine across my way,
Its light did dazzle, lure and blind me;
But fate has borne me far away,
And left, alas, my heart behind me.

Would I recall the wand'rer home,
And with it sweet remembrance lose
Of her whose light has on me shone,
And bathed my soul in ambient dews?

Ah no, on memory let me live,
Her eyes my pathway shall illumine;
Or if I *die*, her voice shall give
My soul a passport o'er the tomb.

O could I see her once again!
Despair and death my mind should flee;
Love, joy and hope assert their reign,
My life, my fate, when shall it be?

LITTLE REENA.

WANDERED on this little maiden
O'er the woodland's narrow lane,
Treading on the shadows sombre,
On the leaves her small feet's pressure
Smoothed to fairer shape again.

On the shadows bowing lowly
To the little nymph so fair,
Entering like a ray of moonlight,
Pale, and gliding on so smoothly
Like a spirit of the air.

She had on a snowy garment,
Seemed to fit her like a shroud;
And through golden fringed eyelids
Gleamed the light and blue of heaven,—
Shimmering hair like amber cloud.

Neither swift nor slow her movement,
Timed as if to one fixed thought,
Not the bounding step of gladness
Winged from rapturous delight,
And from heart of sunshine caught.

Heeding not the leaves or shadows,
Onward pressed the childish form,
Delicate and small for woman;
But with fixedness of purpose
That from childhood ne'er was born.

From whence came she? whither going?
Will she never rest or tire?
Soon the darker shades of evening
With a fear, a doubt, a weirdness
Will her youthful heart inspire.

Nay, she would not fear the demons
Of the forest or the plain,
With a faith so sweet and perfect
She is going to the angels —
Sorrow past, like childish pain.

Hark! we hear a whispered echo,
Soft like an æolian strain,
From a song of sorrow, uttered
In the past, released so lately
From the soul in sweet refrain.

To the words we now may listen,
In the far-off distance heard,—
Dying softly, yet so clearly,
We remember quite distinctly
The sweet music of each word.

“We have always loved each other,
Up from childhood we have been
Brother, sister, more than either,
Happy always when together,
Till a shadow stepped between.

“Not a shadow, but another,
Stranger to us both, but fair,
With a wealth of dark brown tresses,
Eyes that matched — with tinge of reddish —
She had beauty grand and rare.

“Just from school, she came to visit
With a friend of girlish days,
Young as I, but far more charming
(I was but a child in seeming),
With her winsome, city ways.

“Jamie looked on her with wonder
(He was really but a boy),
And with boyish pride was flattered
To be lifted up to manhood
By a new-felt, new-found joy.

“We had walked to school together,
He and I for many a year.
He would always take my satchel,
Always make for me nice footprints
When the snow lay cold and drear.

“He forever in my dreaming
Seemed a portion of my life.
Orphaned early, every throbbing
That belongs unto the lonely
He had soothed of pain or strife.

“Always called me little Reena,
Princess of a fairy tale ;
Said I never seemed like mortal —
He to save me from all danger
Would the giant’s fortress scale.

“Hunting for the bright-eyed daisies
Peeping out from meadow nook,
Gath’ring armsful as the summer
Threw her treasures on our pathway —
Pathway by the pebbled brook.

“We were happy, happy children,
Happy too, when childhood passed
We together planned our future,
‘Jamie would for little Reena
Labor always to the last.’

“What were life without my Jamie?
He so strong, and good, and brave.
She to him is better suited,
She can help him, lift him higher
On the tide of fortune’s wave.

“She could *live* without my Jamie,
She can never love like me ;
But if she can make him happy,
And he loves her more than Reena,
From my soul I set him free.

“Unto me last night a vision,
As I lay so mute and chill,
Came, and like a flood of moonlight
On the dark and cheerless desert,
Did my room and senses fill.

“Then I knew it was an angel
By her downy wings and face,
Face such joy and peace diffusing
That I felt a light from heaven
Streamed across the darkened place.

“I could feel the glorious presence
Mortal eye may not define,
And a finger pointing upward
Freed my soul from earthly longing,
Placed it on a purer shrine.”

The song had ceased — still the maiden
Onward, like as in a dream,
Half asleep, and half awaking,
With a wild ecstatic frenzy —
On the night her white robes gleam.

She is going to the angels —
True indeed will prove her dream,
Tireless soul, and frame so fragile —
She is going to the angels,
They will bear her spirit over,
Gently o'er the unknown stream.

Like a bird that wounded slightly
Flutters downward to the earth,
Light she falls — the dawn is breaking —
There they found her — sleeping gently —
Wakeless sleep from soulless birth.

SOCIAL DIPLOMACY.

THERE are times when round us gather
Mists of care and doubts so deep,
That we stagger in our blindness
Of the wisest course to keep —
Course most free from selfish feeling,
Looking most to others' good —
And to steer between the breakers
Of the tempest and the flood
Calmly, smoothly, without wrecking
Human happiness or name,
Is by far a greater triumph
Than the vaunted hero's fame.

Could we guide the thoughts of others
When we *know* they're gone astray,
Free them from all false delusions,
Wrong suspicions cast away;
Show the honest, kindly motives
Some are prone to misconstrue,
And to inner true conviction
Ope to them a clearer view.

Could we, when our life is darkened
By a false and phantom train,
Generated without reason
In, perhaps, a dear friend's brain —

Could we then as in a mirror
See a plainly printed scroll
Of each other's thoughts and feelings,
Heart to heart and soul to soul;
But we cannot, and in darkness,
Cautiously around we grope —
Phantasies without foundation,
Hardest foes with which to cope.
And to steer among the breakers,
And the elements subdue,
Is a diplomatic triumph
Great enough for me or you.

RETROSPECTION.

IN looking back o'er scenes of life,
The plans and schemes for living,
In viewing all the cares and strife,
Forgetting and forgiving,—
O who would live life o'er again—
Content to take the chances
Of wayward fortune's smile or frown,
To gild or blight our fancies?

We know a cross awaits each birth,
From which there is no fleeing;
Unconsciously we take it up,
A portion of our being.
The loss of friends, remembered tears,
Vain hopes and self denials,
The palling pleasures, empty shows,
Deceits and endless trials.

O who the cross would take again?
Tho' sometimes hid in roses,
And like a feather in its weight
Forgotten there reposes.

Tho' we remember peaceful days,
And blissful moments given,
That lifted from us every care,
And made of earth a heaven.

So much the deeper seemed the gloom
When adverse clouds did thicken,
And at the train of miseries
Our hearts would faint and sicken.
O who can say I would again
Live o'er the pain and pleasure?
Experience should rather fix
The thoughts on firmer treasure.

On Him who bore for us a cross,
In help divine believing,
The brow of faith and childlike trust
Is still a crown receiving.

SPRING.

ON earth the smile of heaven
Rested, at early dawn;
And through the sleeping buds
New life did shoot, and beauty,
Like the whispered joy that
Flits across the new-born infant's
Face, brightened the odorous rosy gems
Throughout the grand garden
Of nature. Trees, shrubs,
And grasses all had taken
On the tender loveliness of
Spring, and a rare and
Wholesome freshness filled the
Air like melted ice filtered
Through fragrant meadows.

Give me a northern
Clime, where one may note
The change as winter's icy
Grasp gives way to gentler Spring,
And day by day may count
New blades of grass, prized
Because so rare, and as promises

Of more beauteous, bounteous
Treasures about to wake to life,
Nursed on the generous bosom
Of their mother Earth.

And also in the soul
New treasures spring,
New hope, new joy and
Grateful praise renew our
Life and love, and make
Us young again.

O, Spring, I would
Not have thee merged in
Winter as in sunny climes,
Thrusting thy beauties forth
Before thy time, and lose
The exaltation thy dawning
Glories bring; not even to make
Thy reign perpetual.

Like a dear sweet
Friend I'll watch thy coming, whom
Absence ever renders doubly dear,
Or as the returning bloom of
Health upon the drooping
Loved one's cheek, or if no more,
As type of the immortal soul
Freed from the icy bonds of death.

NOVEMBER.

The heavens are leaden and gray,
Save fitful clouds scudding away;
And the strong blasts chilling and drear —
They whistle and moan in their might,
And sweep the brown leaves from our sight
In this, the black month of the year.

The skeleton trees, bare and grim,
Chant low a funereal hymn
And bend to the mad wind in fear.
The weary soul echoes the strain,
Forgetting all save grief and pain,
In this, the black month of the year.

To adamant earth's frozen down,
With herbage all crispen and brown,
No vestige of life doth appear.
Perchance a beloved one has fled —
We never cease mourning the dead
In this, the black month of the year.

Obscurely the morning light breaks,
And darkness untimely o'ertakes

The daylight as evening draws near.
So gloom in the heart doth prevail
Over joy, and we weep and bewail
In this, the black month of the year.

A treasure from earth has been borne
This month, we ever shall mourn
Till death in his pity draws near.
I see a fair vision of light
Above and beyond the long night
In this, the black month of the year.

Spread softly thy mantle, O snow,
On the grave of our love lying low,
To her thou wert ever most dear ;
An emblem of purity meet
To crown the lost bud at our feet,
In this, the black month of the year.

EPITAPH.

DEAR Lotie, I know thou art near,
I hear the sweet tones of thy voice,
Thy words they do comfort and cheer:
"I'm happy, dear mamma, rejoice,
Thy own little angel is waiting for thee
In her beautiful home till thy spirit is free."

SUMMER AND WINTER MUSINGS.

AS the softened light succeeded
To the noontime's garish ray,
And from out the sleeping zephyrs
Sprang a bright one forth to play.
Waking up the sleepy leaflets,
Swaying branches to and fro,
Making all the lazy shadows
Dance to order high and low.
Like a twig lopped by the woodsman
On a rustic seat I lay
Overcome by heat oppressive
Of the still long summer's day, —
Like a dead branch but in seeming,
I did listen to the song,
Universal throughout nature,
Of insects piping loud and long.
Monotonous, but still how peaceful,
Lulled as in eternal calm.
All the elements seemed sleeping,
Quelled as by some magic charm,
Till the wayward breeze came stealing
To each slumb'ring flower and leaf;
And the roses bowed a welcome,

And the grape-vines shook their fans,
Towzer sleeping by the threshold
Rose to lick his master's hands.
Silver poplar by the roadside
Gleamed more brightly as it shook,
And the pansies opened widely
Eyes half closed in sunny nook.

Dear, delicious breeze ! how grateful
To the human sense, as well
As unto the flowery kingdom ;
Drooping gems by dingle, dell—
I could see their gracious welcome,
Wavings of an untaught grace ;
And I felt its cooling kisses
Sweeping o'er my fevered face.
Still I heard the insects' humming,
Grateful both for wind and sun,
And I felt that they for others
Did far more than I had done.
Taught a lesson of contentment,
I had raised no song of praise,
But in dreamy, listless musings
Wasted many hours and days.
Sometimes happy, sometimes weeping,
Never with determined will
Had resolved to face with calmness
Life's rough storms for good or ill.
But how could I, while my vessel
In clear waters had been cast,

And no real storms or breakers
O'er its pathway then had passed?
As in childhood, do we ever
Prize the present fleeting hours,
Till the sorrow laden future
Sets that time among the flowers.
Yet who does not feel like weeping
Sometimes, tho' 'twere hard to know
Why the heart surcharged with tear drops
Till the eyelids overflow?
Tears of joy and tears of sadness —
There are many kinds of tears;
The natural and sweet expression
Of our many hopes and fears.
Thrilled by any grand achievement
How the tear unbidden springs,
Not from grief, but sympathetic,
As are touched the varied strings.
Then the present and the future
Opened censors of delight,
And the spirit shrank from jarrings
On the feelings or the sight.
Dearly loved by child and kindred,
And by husband still more dear;
Perchance unto the bliss of heaven,
For earthly good we drew too near.
One sweet angel from thence straying
Came within our hearts to dwell —
Little Lilian, happy Lilian
Floated on the winged hours,—

Sweet and lovely was our darling,
Fair among earth's purest flowers.
I can see her tripping lightly
Home from school and up the lane,
Feel once more her small arm's pressure
And the sweet kiss once again.
What is there so tender, holy,
So unselfish and so pure
As within the heart of mother
Love for child? eternal, sure.
He would come his smile containing
All of joy the world can give,
Love our scepter, love our ruler,
Love the charm for which all live.
Then we knew not that the present
Was alone our own to call,
And 'tho happy, still the future
Would be bless'd beyond it all.

MORNING.

OVER the hilltops, over the treetops
The sun shone forth in his splendor.
Over the housetop and through the casement
He shone on our blossom tender —
Shone on our blossom who sleeping lay,
That golden dawn of a twelfth birthday.

On the white eyelids earth's splendor throwing,
They lift, and the blue eyes beaming
Look out with delight, as thought awakens
The joys that wait upon dreaming.
Proud little lady, so grand and gay,
Like many before on a twelfth birthday.

EVENING.

THE green sward is dotted with children,
They dance and they carol in play,
The air it echoes with shoutings
Because of somebody's birthday.

So many bright heads with locks flowing,
White robes with their ribbons so fine ;
But *she* I'll remember forever,
How *she* looked on that day, darling mine.

Her eyes, with the tint of the sapphire,
Like stars shone through fringes of jet ;
And skin where the roses and lilies
In beauty so daintily met.

But something there was more than beauty,
That gladdened and won ev'ry heart,
She knew how to make others happy —
Few are they possessing this art.

And yet *art* we hardly can deem it,
A gift more of nature I ween,
A charm exercised without effort,
Unconscious perception, but keen.

No envy or malice was cherished,
Her little friends loved her too dear;
Her presence was pleasant as sunshine,
Or as blossoms when first they appear.

Among the gay groups she was gayest,
Yet none could be drooping or sad;
Her light figure tripping so gaily
'Mong all, made the dullest feel glad.

The sunset was gorgeous that evening,
And over the whole western sky
Gleamed islands of gold and of crimson,
With billows of snow rolling by.

And on to the heads of the children
And over the velvety green,
The last rays streamed rosy and dazzling,
With softening shadows between.

The whole scene to me was so charming,
On memory's gilt leaf evermore
'Tis stamped — and the face of my darling
Each sunset doth ever restore.

O why should not youth last forever?
And why should there ever be pain?
Alas, I weep that I never
Can see with the same eyes again.

I hear happy voices still ringing,
“Good night, dear Lilian, good night.”
I see the excitement and pleasure
On faces so joyous and bright.

“Good night, mamma dear,” said my darling,
As quietly resting she lay
Upon her small bed, and she added,
“I wish ev’ry day were birthday.”

THE BEACH.

“COME sit on this rock, my beloved,
And look at the grand heaving sea,
The power and the charm of its movements
Surpasseth all earth's mystery.
The tide it is lashing
The rocks with a plashing
By moonlight, but sit down by me.

“Let us gaze on the face of the monster,
Its writhings, and leapings, and din;
No rest or repose for its waters
As the tide doth forever roll in.
Forever still dashing,
And foam flecks flashing
Like ages before rolling in.

“The dark waves are decked for a revel,
Snow-crested, and thickly inlaid
With gems from the moon's shining circlet,
Her pathway in glory arrayed.
The billows are prancing,
And wavelets are dancing
By moonlight, in glory arrayed.

“Thou art silent, my love, art spell-bound,
And charmed by some mystical wave,

Or lost like a speck on its bosom
Submerged in a fathomless grave?
The sea it entrances,
And moonlight enhances
The magical power of the wave."

"Thy voice is such music," I answered,
"And the sea in its grand harmony —
In silence I'd listen forever
To thee, and its grand harmony.
The pale moon so tender
A soft robe of splendor
Has spread o'er the earth and the sea."

"My senses are filled and in concord
As harpstrings are tuned to agree,
Too happy to listen in silence —
Forever in silence to thee.
The sea it doth move me,
The moonlight doth soothe me,
And all are united in thee."

"Thy cheek, love, is pale in the moonlight,
A dampness is falling around,
It comes from the mist rising yonder
Like phantom from prison unbound.
He spreads a white curtain
Till all grows uncertain,
And even the sea seems but sound.
Come, love, away."

DAYLIGHT.

THE sky was blue, cerulean blue,
Bespeaking a tranquil day ;
And calm the sea as the sea can be
In its ever restless sway.
Little Lilian, our Lilian,
So happy when near the sea,
Had watched the clouds from early dawn
To see what the weather would be.

For she with her deep and calm delight,
So free from boisterous fun,
While sailing in his much-loved craft
The heart of the skipper had won.
No matter how swift with a favoring wind
The boat scud o'er the sea,
No matter how high on the waves they rode —
The happier then was she.

And when other children he took to sail,
None ever her seat must fill,
For he said the rest would nestle about
And she was so calm and still.

Now a party had gone in his boat to-day,
And with them Lilian dear ;
"The wind was right," the skipper had said,
And the sky both bright and clear.

"Good-by, mamma dear," rang a young voice out,
And handkerchiefs playfully wave ;
I wave in return, but silently add
A prayer from all danger to save.

LATER.

A rumbling sound at distance faintly heard —
'Tis naught but the roaring sea ;
The light grows dim upon the page I read,
Ah ! what can the reason be ?
A voice in the passage cries out "A squall !"
I thrill with a sudden fear,
And rush to the door. "Is there danger ?" I cried
Of the first man standing near.

"Oh no," said he, "they are nearing the shore
The next wave will send them in."
The boat I discerned with the sails all furled,
'Mid the rain, the roar, and the din.
The wind round the corner whistled and groaned,
And the clouds, like birds of prey,
Darkened the sky they hovered so near,
Or scudded in fear away.

The boat holds steady and hugs the shore,
The skipper doth understand
Each tack and curve of the wind, and waits
A favoring gust to land.

"Sit perfectly still," he commands his crew,
The little ones clinging in fright
To the older ones, and hiding their heads —
"Sit still I'll bring you in right."

But Lilian hides not her head, nor clings
In fear to an older side;
But calm as the skipper she watches the storm
With mingled joy and pride.
Moments are ages to me, who wait
In trembling fear on the shore,
Waiting and watching my darling to clasp —
To clasp in safety once more.

And see, like an arrow shot from a bow,
The boat to the wharf doth speed —
They're landed safe — I have her now,
But shake like a wind-stricken reed.
I cannot speak, but rush with the rest
Away from the storm — we two,
"'Twas splendid, mamma," she only said,
"Except when I thought of you."

THE SAND.

HAPPILY sped the days at the sea,
Fashion not holding the sway;
All there abiding sought freedom and rest
Rather than show or display.
And Lilian climbed the o'er-hanging rocks
Or wandered with me on the shore,
Or played in the sand when the tide was out —
That sand of musical lore.

The sand, when crushed by the hand or foot,
In musical tone would respond;
As if every grain of the pure white mass
Had been touched by Euterpe's wand.
And Lilian listened — "O now," she said,
"I know where the fairies dwell —
I hear them, and wish they would only come up
That we might *see* them as well."

"And mamma," she said, "A long time past
I've thought there was no such thing
As a fairy — but now I would like to know
What else could make the sand sing?"

I used to sit by the wild rose bush,
Just waiting for one to spring
From out the heart of a bloßsom sweet,
And unto me fairy gifts bring.

“But never a sound but the wind I heard,
And never a fairy’s head
Peeped out from the roses I watched so long,—
Peeped out from the roses red.
Mamma, in fairies I love to believe”
(With a doubting funny smile),
“I know that you older ones never do,
But laugh at us all the while.

“I suppose the fairy books all are made,
And all the stories are said,
Only to please little children by day,
And coax them at night to bed.
But mamma, you say you cannot explain
The cause of the singing sand;
And so I think it is best to believe
It comes from the fairy band.”

“My darling, so many strange things there are
That no one can understand,
'Tis better that children, and all believe,
That God’s is the fairy hand.”
And as I looked on the towering rocks,
Mountains o’er looking the sea,
I saw indeed His all-powerful hand —
Wrapped in His presence were we.

And Lilian would seek the rocky caves
Where mermaids might love to dwell,
And their siren voices one seemed to hear
In the waves low murmuring swell.
There was imagery meet on every hand
For spirits of air or deep,
And one might hide in a crystal cave,
Or rest on a lofty steep.

Of shells and mosses we gathered a store,
Such treasures in Lilian's eyes,—
Tho' at times a child, and only a child,
She could be a companion wise.
Such questions propounded would puzzle the mind
Of poet, philosopher, sage ;
Tho' only evoked from wonders enrolled
On nature's strangely wrought page.

How much we enjoy her wonderful works !
When hope and love fill the heart ;
To sadness and woe, a mockery all,
Pleasure no more they impart.
So happy were all those bright days of my life,
They now seem like a fairy dream —
A voyage of enchantment, waters unknown
To life's uncertain dark stream.

The season is past — sojourners by sea
Are leaving for homes away ;
We wait for his coming, whose visits we hail,
As dawn doth the perfect day.

HOME AGAIN.

HOW much of comfort do these words imply!
Repeat it o'er, 'tis nature's sweet refrain,

Tho' in our roamings gathering naught but joy,

Yet still with thankful hearts we're home again.

Through each familiar room we wend our way,

There is no change — dear things inanimate
Retain their places — do not fade away,

While others go and come, unchanged they wait ;
When linked with memories of departed ones,
How sacred in our eyes do they become !

But in those days no shadows there had crept,
No such reminders had we in our home.

Out in the garden,

Over the lawn,

Flashing like sunlight,

Pure as the dawn,

Away ran Lilian.

Into the orchard

And down the lane,

By the green meadow

And home again,

Came my Lilian.

All things were charming,
 Ev'ry nook sought,
The thick, thorny bush
 Where the honey bee wrought —
 Bright, fairy Lilian.

Tho' in its beauty
 Summer was dying,
Still we were happy
 When it was flying —
 Happy as Lilian.

SUMMER AND AUTUMN.

HOW gorgeous the beauty of autumn
When summer to shadow-land drifts!
But she spreads a most sumptuous banquet
Of her choicest and daintiest gifts.
She knows that her sweet, tender beauty
Can ne'er by mere show be o'ercast,
And she leaves us to mourn for her treasures,
And sigh for her rosy reign past.

But what if the blossoms are flown,
If one déarer than all we retain?
Why mourn, should all others be gone,
If what we love best doth remain?
Foreboding! from whence was it blown?
It creeps like a dull, heavy pain
To my heart, and over it thrown
Is a dread that stunneth the brain.

But listen! she's coming! I hear
Her step now ascending the stair —
Love tells when my darling is near
Were her footsteps lighter than air.

"I'm weary," she says, "mamma dear," —

Her face it is now more than fair,

Her eyelid droops over a tear

As softly she sinks on a chair.

"Dear heart! does she feel any pain?"

I said, as I soothed and caressed.

"Yes, mamma, but hold me again,

And rock me, I know that is best."

Ofttimes in my lap had she lain

When weary from play she would rest —

But gloom in my heart did remain,

Tho' she fell asleep on my breast.

What is it hangs over my mind

Like a pall, and shuts out the light?

She was well this morning and noon,

But complained of a pain in the night.

'Tis strange, but a dream is entwined

With my thoughts — and ever in sight

My Lilian — but standing behind

A phantom, so pale and so white.

Why paint a sick bed? 'tis painted every day

Upon the tablet of some anxious brain,

No words describe, or artist's skill can draw —

'Tis only seen by those who've felt the pain.

To those who've watched the loved one night and day,

Counted each pulse, and heard the fluttering breath,

Smothered their grief, preserved a cheerful mien,

Expecting hourly the dread angel,—Death.

Our little Lilian lay so still and calm,
Save when in suffering tossed, or fevered sleep.
She had no fear, or dreamed that others had,
All thoughts disturbing we would from her keep.
So near Death came, his shadow o'er her fell,
Chilled her young blood, and glazed the azure eye;
But heaven recalled — his broad wings upward rose,
And for that time he passed our treasure by.

One morn, an interval of sweet repose,
Wishing child-like for something then to do,
She bade me bring her bracelets, earrings, rings,
And all my *own*, glass on the bureau, too.
I gave them all, then sat me down near by,
And watched her deck herself from head to feet,—
Chains glittered in and round her fine floss hair,
Two sets of pendants in each ear so neat,
Long danglers linked together, falling low
Upon her white-draped shoulders sweet.

She tucked the muslin from her arms away —
Those small, white arms — and clasped them round with
bands;
Bands of plain gold, and some of sparkling stones,
Then ringed each thumb and finger of her hands —
Those fairy hands by turns that held the glass
That she might see the progress of her plans.

The watch was partly tucked within a fold,
Not all concealed, the chain by brooch confined;

While strings of crystal beads of varied light
Round the soft ruffle at her neck did wind;
All now arranged, the toilet was complete.

Not soon will fade the picture from my mind,
Strange the effect these glittering baubles gave
Unto my lily rescued from the grave.

I thought of fairy tales of princess changed
To more than mortal beauty by some spell,
Taking all dross, all earthliness away,
A lovely vision, purely spirituelle,
And resting in the sheen that pleased her well.
I felt, O could I now on canvas place
This dream-like picture, and no time erase.

More than a child she looked, and taller seemed,
As there she lay, with cheek so fair, and brow;
When glancing at me with a funny smile,
“Mamma,” she said, “how do you like me now?”
I kissed her with a heart too full to speak,
And prayed in silence o’er her, bending low—
I wept in pity for my own past grief,
And prayed to Him who sent the bless’d relief.

The every day of life that peaceful creeps
And brings no change at least to outward eye,
Would weary in detail the listening ear;
Lacking events, would pass unheeded by.

So in the year and more that passed away,
 Since like a drooping lily, Lilian lay,
No great event could I therein portray —
 But still the phantom of my dream was nigh.

And O the change, the change I would not own,
 Not even to myself, since from that hour
No more the bounding step and bird-like voice,
 All low, subdued by some mysterious power.
No more in childish sports she wished to share,
 No more her laugh rang out upon the air ;
Yet she was happy, happy everywhere
 At times a shade too pale my precious flower.

A languor of the frame, insidious, deep,
 Did seem its vital powers and strength to bind ;
But what it lost, the soul did seem to gain,—
 Mature the thoughts and workings of her mind.

Her love for me, as well, each day increased,
 She'd have me always with her, and I knew
With me each day her happiness did rest,
 Each day on me she more dependent grew.

O should she die ! I could not entertain
 A thought so fraught with misery and pain—
Yet by her side the phantom stood again !
 What would my tender love for her not do ?

How brave she was! how full of hopes and plans!
No phantom to her sight did e'er appear;
"When she got strong so many things she'd do —
When she grew up," the dreams were bright and clear.

How could she die? so cheerful, firm of will,
Her sweet young face each day more radiant still.
She *should*, she *must* all earthly aims fulfill —
Yet how much weaker grown the passing year.

O how we cling to what we love, when seen
A threatening danger, tho' afar or nigh;
To *save*, each power directed to that end,
To *do*, to suffer, and if need be *die*.

We rode, we slowly walked in open air,
I rocked her oftener in the big arm chair,
For her sweet sake some healthful balm prepare —
'Twas all I thought of as the days went by.

How sank my heart when I from time to time
Did note her drop what she was wont to do;
The hair commenced, she loved to comb and curl;
But now, mamma must come and help her through.

Not then, did hope my anxious soul forsake;
Not when her father in his arms would take
Her up the stairway, her little joke would make
All smile, like sunlight on the dew.

"Mamma," she said one day, "come close to me"
(Her arms around my neck), "we're all alone,
Dear mamma, kiss me, nearer, you and I
Do love each other"—O God: the look, the tone—
Where am I? words I thought in whispers said
She's gone; all over now—the spirit flown—
Let me die—think for me, breathe for me,—dead!

Place now the waxen flowers upon her breast,
Within her hands let them forever rest,
In pure white garments she is neatly drest—
She'd like it well.

Let me arrange the fine, soft, flossy hair
The same as she with so much pains and care
Did use, in happy days, so love to wear.
My darling one!

Pansies she loved—let one look up so bright
Into her face, so pure, so sweet, so white,
And turn her head more to the golden light
My radiant flower!

She's smiling now—she sees both earth and heaven—
Her spirit from the beauteous clay not riven
Doth linger yet—blessed boon to mourners given.
My spirit dove!

Bear her away—but gently move and slow—
On the dull earth pile smooth the virgin snow.
To sleep beside her, would that I might go!
Rest, darling, rest!

CHRIST OUR SURE COMFORTER.

WHEN one by one our friends depart,
When one by one our hopes do fade,
And life presents few pleasures ;
When bitter tears unbidden start,
And dreariness and gloom invade
The soul's once guarded treasures,—

What can we do? How can we live?
When all our efforts seem but vain,
And on the heart is pressing
A weight from which no one can give
Relief — a something worse than pain,
And yet avoid confessing.

The sweet content, the interest deep,
That to all efforts lent a zest,
What can, what can again restore?
'Twere better we lie down and sleep,
Where thought forever is at rest,
If that the spirit move no more.

“What matters it? 'twill soon be o'er,
What matters if we're dull or gay?”

These words express such sadness.
O better far to die before
The rosy dreams have passed away —
Die in our hope and gladness.

Philosophy may preach and tell
Of joys that calmness, patience bring,
True comfort thence deriving ;
Religion brings its charms as well,
An anchor strong on which to fling
Our burdens — strength reviving.

O would that God to me would send
A quickening faith — new power awake,
His love and light revealing.
This apathy to worship bend,
For listless steps a pathway make —
In humble prayer I'm kneeling.
O Christ ! in pity now look down,
Thou art our rescue, Savior all,
I feel that Thou art near me.
Thou knowest my need, and from Thy crown
Jewels of faith and love do fall —
In Thee I trust, O hear me !

THE PICTURE.

TO only look upon thee, tears will start;
On thee! yes, *thee*, thou art, and yet art not.
There is the look, the soul doth still illume,
The winsome, tender, bright ethereal smile
That draws the heart unto itself, and makes
Us pause, as if a sudden light were shed
Upon our path, and howsoe'er obscured
Or dark, reveals to us a glimpse of heaven.

Yet thou art *not*—mere pasteboard black and white,
No colors called in prism, painted on
By skill mechanic—from whence the copy?
From God's fair handiwork—living, breathing,
Sweet and rare, as ever blessed or gladdened
Sight of poor humanity.
O bless the art that first impression took
Of human face divine, copied to life,
As near as light and shade can reproduce,
Lacking the substance.
Expression, character, *soul*, are there,
Saved from the vanished clay
Of her—the loved, the lost, fled now
Forever!

With yearning soul do we upon thee gaze;
A fascination fraught with pain and pleasure
Holds us like a spell. A something of her
So near and dear is there recalled, we
Almost think it real. This the joy,
Gaze on, gaze on — delusive shadow,
Changeless, unmoved by tears or smiles —
Thou *art*, and yet art *not*.

MOURNING.

O how can I e'er cease to mourn
My darling lost, my soul's flower,
Nurtured in love, and daily worn
Nearest my heart, my heart's bower
Twined with the blossoms of hope and joy —
The past and present without alloy —
But it drooped one fatal hour.

I wander round from room to room,
I try to think she is there;
I nothing find but gloom, gloom, gloom,
O where is my darling, where?
If thou art near me, sweet angel mine,
Give me some token, some token or sign —
I'm sick with grief and despair.

I look in vain, I shut my eyes,
In fancy see her again;
All, all too vague, tears, tears and sighs,
A phantasy of the brain.
"Must I live on and see her no more?"
O, could I only have gone before,
Escaping this woe and pain.

Ope the closet, her dresses sweet
On hooks where she placed them last,
Cuffs and collars pinned in so neat,
The same she wore in the past.
Let me kiss them — kiss the slippers small —
A subtle essence may dwell in all,
Of *her*, may o'er them be cast.

A lock of hair? not yet; not yet,
I cannot look on it now —
Portion of her — charm of regret,
Severed from beauty's young brow.
A fragment only, saved from decay,
I shudder to think of it now.

“Come in thy beauty my own spirit dove,
Come as of yore, and caress me;
Descend in thy freshness, surround me with love,
From thy home in high heaven, now bless me.
I beseech, I entreat thee my future to guide,
My angel! in safety with thee I shall ride
To harbor, in safety — O bless me.”

A MOONLIGHT NIGHT.

BEAUTIFUL night ! not night but softened day,
Flooded with moonlight are thy garments gray,
And white the ground with snow ;
Smooth-crested snow, the moonbeams love to rest
In mingled purity on thy calm, white breast,
O spotless, virgin snow.

The tall trees stand around, in bold contrast,
And on thy whiteness their dark shadows cast,
Adding another charm.
No whistling wind disturbs the tranquil scene,
Enchanting night ! luminous and serene —
Our hearts unto thee warm.

No words express the glory to us given —
A holy light uniting earth and heaven,
This hour doth here reveal.
The scene to purer, higher thought impels ;
And on His goodness, power and wisdom dwells,
A language all must feel.

EARLY SPRING.

O SPRING! the plain brown garments cast aside
Bequeathed to thee from winter's vanquished reign.
Come forth in all thy freshness, beauty, pride —
With gladsome hearts we welcome thee again.

We hear thee in the strong and changeful blast
That sweeps us by so soft and cold by turns;
We feel thee in the warmth upon us cast,
As high in heaven the sun more fiercely burns.

We see thee in the little green-tipped buds
Just bursting into life beneath thy smile;
And in the swelling streams whose loosened floods
In joyous freedom rush for many a mile.

A robin's note fell on our ear this morn,
A herald sure, dear Spring, that thou art near.
Fresh blades of grass some sunny mounds adorn,
Still charily thy beauties do appear.

But O, we love thee, how so e'er thou art,
Thy name alone doth joy and gladness bring —
New life with thee within the soul doth start —
Queen of the seasons! we do hail thee, Spring!

THE MERRIMAC.

THE city lies before me, and the sun
Upon the placid water shines like fire,
Upon the waters of the Merrimac
His red rays rest, ere they expire.

The city on thy banks, dear Merrimac,
Lies stretched to view on either side,—
Brick blocks with thousand eyes indented, all
Do look on thee in stately pride.

And why not? Through thee they rose in grandeur,
And stand the city's noblest pride to-day.
Beautiful, beautiful stream! carrying
Gold and plenty on thy calm way.

Varied and rich the landscape on thy shores,
The country stretching far away to right,
And back to where the wooded mountains meet
The sky, in contrast dark and light.

And still beyond rise undulating peaks
Above the marked horizon's circling line,
More shadowy these, like clouds of palest blue,
Save that their turrets moveless shine.

Beauty surrounds thee as the daylight fades,
The charm thou lendest — thou art beauty's queen,
The sun his last bright glance on thee doth throw,
His love within the valley green.

A *fairy* queen art thou, with magic power,
To raise a city in so short a space;
Where once the Indian through the wild wood roved,
Or in thy mirror viewed his face.

'Tis sweet in fancy but to see him glide
In light canoe across thy waters clear,
Silence unbroken save by plash of oars,
Or sudden leap of fishes near.

Or in the distance roar of unchecked falls,
Or wild bird pouring forth his richest lay,—
To see thy banks o'erhung with tree and vine,
Whose shadows kiss thee on thy way.

Contented nature had no use for thee
Beyond the sweet enhancing of her charms;
No barrier placed she on thy winding grace,
But wrapt thee in her sheltering arms.

Utility has won from her embrace
A portion of thy beauty and thy power;
But lost to thee, except from savage breast,
The myriad worship of this hour.



THE MERRIMAC.

" 'Tis sweet in fancy but to see him glide
In light canoe across thy waters clear."

How many eyes are gazing on thee now,
As sunset brings thee out in rosy view,
That see again the fairy dreams of youth
Reflected in thy mirror true.

How many hearts a thankful homage feel
For all the benefits received through thee —
To *thee* the praise above all *human* skill,
For thou art God's machinery.

MY ELM.

UNDER the shade of the dear old tree
After long years have fled,
I sit me down on the time-smoothed seats
Placed there by hands now dead.

The seat, a rock which nature had formed
Into a sort of chair,
And moss now covered the once rough sides —
Covered since I was there.

Unchanged the chair save this tapestry green ;
The tree is larger in size,
More portly its trunk with age has become,
And doubtless its head more wise.

The better of this I think I may judge
Should now it harangue as of yore —
The oak, it is called the monarch of trees,
But still I believe mine knows more.

Yes *mine*, for I claimed and chose it as such,
When first my young fancy awoke
To know that its beauty all others excelled,
And I loved it long ere it spoke.

Full well I remember the song it sung,
When I bade it a last adieu,
And having naught else at present to say,
If you like I will tell it to you.

O fair was the day, the sun in his pride,
A rare gauzy mantle of gold
O'er nature's rich green had carelessly thrown,
His splendor with sweetness enrolled.

My tree it quivered and shook with delight,
Transparent its emerald leaves ;
A quickening life through branches and twigs,
To its heart from the sunlight receives.

And in my *own* heart the sunlight did rest,
The sunshine of love true and clear ;
I knew that my tree in sympathy glowed,
Its softest vibrations could hear.

In silence I sat enjoying the scene,
Surrounded by love's mystic power ;
As in a sweet dream my senses absorbed
The magical charm of the hour.

My tree with no preamble then, save a kiss
From the tip of a waving bough,
In a tuneful voice half spoken, half sung,
Did carol these words soft and low.

“Maiden so fair, maiden so gay,
He'll come to-morrow and take her away,
Let us be happy to-day.

“Turn all my leaves, turn to the light,
All new little twigs look up clear and bright,
Be lovely unto her sight.

“Bend low my boughs and kiss her cheek,
In tones æolian lovingly speak,
No more your charms will she seek.

“Branches and leaflets awake, awake,
Such a grand jubilee all of ye make,
Each root of my heart shall shake.

“See where she sits so good, so fair,
Illumined with love, the only guest there,—
Love reigneth everywhere.

“I think old friends as good as new,
We would have sheltered and loved her life through,
May he prove steadfast and true.

“Here she would wander, here she has played,
From a little child in our welcome shade,
And here were her love dreams made.

“Who knows, who knows when we'll meet again?
The very thought is a quiver of pain,—
For her sake sorrow restrain.

"She pats my bark with hand so small,
The tears would start, but I smother all —
To-night in dew they will fall.

"No shadows creep, no branches sigh,
Dim not the sweet light of her heart or eye,
No sorrow when she is by.

"Who cares for the love of a tree?
Who knows it can feel, or can hear or see?
Motionless ever to be.

"She will forget when far away
Joys that are past of an hour or day
In the future's bright array.

"My love is rooted so firm and deep
Nothing can shake it — 'twill only keep
Increasing, while her's will sleep."

I heard no more, but bowed my head
Low down on its trunk, and tearfully said,
"I'll only forget when dead."

No farther word from dear old tree,
More brightly it glowed, surprised I could see
I had heard its soliloquy.

My arms I clasped around it then,
Walked quickly away, and wondering when
I'd look upon it again.

O many long years have passed away
Since I bade the dear tree adieu,
And many a scene of joy and pain
Since then has my spirit been through.

How strange it seems while resting here
As the old time comes back again ;
And a smiling maid again appears,
As in youth, with her rosy train.

A rosy train of love, hope, and joy,
That came without seeking or call,—
The past no spectre had then to raise,
The present and future were all.

But now my dreams are all of the past,
Of the past, and my old friend the tree ;
I'm sure it knew me as soon as in sight,
And pleasantly nodded to me,

It wraps me round with the sweet old spell
As I lean on its trunk once more,
And all my thoughts absorbed in itself,
It hums a low tune as of yore.

But every word I can understand,
I've no doubt it thinks me asleep ;
But one thing sure, asleep or awake,
Its sayings I carefully keep.

"She's here again, our blossom of yore,
As on *us* old Time's busy finger
Traces has left on the outward form—
No matter, while freshness doth linger

"Around the heart, enduring through all,
The tempest, the calm and the blast—
Gems the most precious are always those
That through the furnace have passed.

"And she, our favorite child, has felt
The joys and the sorrows of life
Since leaving us, but a hope and a trust
Has sustained through all earthly strife.

"Trust in the power that can smite or bless,
That giveth and taketh away,—
In fetters of ice subdueth our pride,
And adorns on a future day.

"Hardy of limb, deep rooted in earth,
Long time I shall flourish, I ween,
When she who doth lean on my trunk to-day
Has quietly passed from life's scene.

"I know that we both are more thoughtful grown,
See life with a different eye,
But ever unchanged my love for her,
And ever will be till I die.

"One virtue I have, steadfast and true,
.. She never will seek me in vain,
Tho' objects more dear are lost to her,
On this spot I'm sure to remain

"She has learned ere this the friends are rare
Whom we always know where to find —
But life she accepts as dealt to her,
With no bitterness left behind.

'She sees the good, and firmly believes
The roughness of life was given
That all may seek the golden steps
Leading from earth to heaven.

"O could she but feel and understand
The love long abiding in me,
I think she would prize the faithful heart
That still dwells in the poor old tree."

"O tree," I said, with pity roused
By the plaintive chanting now heard
(So sweet it long held me entranced),
"Your love is an honor preferred

"To aught the world on me can bestow,
And prized beyond any lost love ;
I'm only too happy to lean on thee,
And on Him who reigneth above."

I heard no more. My voice, it would seem,
Had broke the magnetic chain
That bound our thoughts in unison sweet,
And made the heart's language so plain

Unto each other, *spoken* or not—
And thankful all mortals should be,
Who may chance to gain in this world of change
The firm-rooted love of a tree.

THE GIFT.

“ A BUNCH of wild flowers, dear mother for you ;
You'll prize them the more because they are few,
And gave me such trouble to find ;
All over the fields I searched everywhere,
So scattered they were one here, and one there —
'Till gathered a handful to bind.”

It was a sweet gift, the first I had seen,
For spring had scarce donned a soft robe of green,
And left her young blossoms asleep ;
But sweet as they were, and fair to the sight,
The *giver* had lent them a charm more bright —
And mem'ry their freshness will keep.

A LANDSCAPE.

WAS ever nature half so sweet as now?
Bursting as 'twere at once upon the view
In all her beauty, carefully concealed
'Till perfect in a garment fresh and new.
More dearly prized the sudden charms displayed,
The sweets more precious still because delayed.

The air with perfume laden from the trees,
The pear, the apple, and the sweet brier rose —
Luxuriant foliage, all so young and fresh,
With every tint of green in sunlight glows.
Upon the ground green velvet smoothly spread,
A dome of white and azure overhead.

Should there be sorrow in a world so fair?
Why not the lost revive in beauty too?
Why must the loved lie mouldering in decay
When all the withered herbage blooms anew?
The feast is freely to the senses given,
The eye of *faith* must see our flowers in heaven.

AFTER A SHOWER.

O LET me breathe the freshness left by thee
Sweet summer shower!

With sense of smell redoubled, quaff it free,
Sweet, sweetest hour!

Were all thy drops from fount ambrosial shed
O'er blooming earth?

And all its beauty, fragrance, with thee wed
At early birth?

A tiny lake within each chalice fair
Like crystal glows!

The trees and shrubs bedecked in gems so rare
Gleam in repose!

To look, to breathe, O who would wish for more?
Supremely blest

In either, one joy must yield before .
The surcharged breast

Another to itself can quite receive —
Sweet vanished shower!

Thy lingering freshness I'm content to *breathe*,
This precious hour.

OUR BOY.

FILL up the glass dish high 'bove the brim,
With strawberries ripe and red ;
The rich golden cream skim, skim, skim,
The table most daintily spread.
Bless him — he's coming to-day !
Bring all the goodies he used to enjoy,
Before that he went away.

Away at school the dainties are rare,
Nothing the same as at home,
Boys who don't like the commonest fare
Can fast 'till next time doth come.
No one to care while they are there
If they are suited or no —
O the trial is hard to bear,
When the boy from home must go.

Yet he is coming, coming to-day,
Let's think no more of the past ;
But make the house look cheerful and gay,
His room as he left it last.
What if he be in statue grown tall ?
He's still but a boy at heart ;
His cheek will glow when he sees us all,
And tears in his eyes will start.

O I so long to look on his face,
Honest, yet brim full of fun ;
I hope he retains the boyish grace
Although he is *twenty-one*.
Four years have passed since that dreary day,
The first time leaving his home ;
We tried to maintain a careless way,
But both were at last overcome.

And I did think my heart would break,
Would burst with its swelling grief,
When he from sight did fairly depart
Nothing afforded relief.
I wildly rushed from home to the street,
And wandered heedless along ;
I could only see his young face sweet,
Groping its way in the throng.

No one, no one but strangers to see,
No home endearments to find ;
Tenderly nurtured always was he —
A nature unworldly and kind.
But he will never turn back or complain,
However rough be the way,
Knowing the knowledge one striveth to gain
For hardships will fully repay.

Lonely he'll be when the long nights come,
Thinking of those left behind —
He was so happy, and loved his home,
So close with his being entwined.

So I kept thinking and sighing away,
With step all listless and weary,
'Till into darkness faded the day —
Then back to the home so dreary.

Into his room for many a day,
I tried but never could go ;
Aught that was his, since he went away,
Served but to increase my woe.
All ye fond mothers, my pity take,
Whose happiness now depends
On a darling son, your hearts will break
When the sweet companionship ends.

I did not intend to digress thus far —
Our boy he is coming home !
Not things that are past, but things that are,
Better take all as they come.
Throw open the doors and windows wide,
Let all the bright sunlight in,
And unto our hearts with joy and pride,
Most thankfully welcome him.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

DELICATE flowers! of maiden bloom
Ye mind me ever—

Thy pearly tints with those like rosy shell,
Blending together.

Within a wreath of polished emerald leaves
So sweetly lying,
Thy modest, perfect beauty only
With thy fragrance vieing.

Ye bring to mind again the days of youth,
And through them gliding
All glorious visions, dew gemmed, and like
Aurora riding

From out the gates of wakening morn—
Upon the flowers
Sprinkling the cooling dew, guarding against
Phœbus' too scorching hours.

And hope and happiness in forms of lovely mould,
Floating forever
Before the sight, presenting fairy scrolls,
And fading never.

Bright eyes, bright lips, sweet breath come once again
While on thee gazing ;
And the lost sweets and blooms of earth once more
Thy charms upraising.

Soft words, soft winds and kisses wafted to me
Like unto spring time ;
All fresh young charms within the heart revive
While we look on thine.

PANSIES.

SHE loved ye best of all the garden flowers —
Your unpretending heads
Lifted so bright at evening's dewy hours
Above your lowly beds.

With colors so distinct — in varying shade
Of purple to dark brown,
A dash of gold on some so neatly laid —
In texture velvet down.

And yet beyond all this, ye hold a charm —
Through nature's magic art —
Such visions mid thy beauty might alarm
A young unthinking heart.

The hideous faces of old men look out
From your attractive guise.
A human sense doth compass ye about —
Expression in your eyes.

Comic, or sad, yet loveliness withal,
Doth in perfection reign,
E'en like the moon whose beauty doth enthrall,
Tho' seen the man so plain.

And she did worship aught in beauty's mould,
But added thereunto
A taste that nature's mysteries would unfold,
And search them through and through.

Over your heads she hung with fond delight,
Culling a dainty one,
With fingers deft, and face so lily white —
Alas, her work is done!

Beauteous blossoms, miss ye not the hand
That nursed ye day by day?
How can ye bloom, and grace the lonely land,
When she is ta'en away?

PEACE.

O COULD I but command thee at my will,
And bid this tumult in my breast be still,
Thy praise my constant theme should ever fill,
Sweet, blessed Peace!

I've tried so oft to lure thee in thy flight—
Thy flight to earth from out its heaven-born height,
Revealed so clearly to my inner sight,
My heart would cease

Its quivering, wild or weary beating,
Hushed to one prayer, and calmly greeting
The vision yearned for most, still, still repeating
Dear angel, come!

So far from me, and yet at times so near,
The music of thy wings is wafted here,
And paths of doubt and gloom are all made clear—
Make this thy home.

Here in this heart so weary, worn and lonely
I fain would dwell with thee a brief space only,
Ere laid to rest in darksome cave so homely —
Under the sod.

But I must wait till thus by death set free
My soul shall find that perfect rest with thee,
“Passing all understanding ” deigned to me —
“The peace of God.”

SUMMER'S CLOSE.

TINGE on summer blossom heightens,
Smoke tree kindles into fire ;
Earth's rich beauty glows and ripens
Ere its gala days expire.

Robins large and plump alighting
On the fountain's edge to sip,—
Others on the surface kiting
With a splash their fan tails dip.

Mountain ash tree brightly flashing
With its berries scarlet red ;
Robins see them, and go dashing
In among them bill and head.

What a feast ! and some so greedy
That a fight doth soon ensue—
Just like children that are needy,
Not content with what's their due.

Fields with fruit so heavy laden
Props support the burdened trees ;
Comes along a rosy maiden
Gathers one, with pinch and squeeze,



SUMMER'S CLOSE.

"Robins large and plump alighting
On the fountain's edge to sip.—"

And a taste, to see if mellow —
Longing for the time to come
When they will be ripe and yellow,
Grateful joy to feast on one.

Grass to second crop is growing
For the farmer's busy hand,
And the yellow blades are showing
Where the sun has parched the land.

Twilights all are getting hazy,
Crickets chirrup every night,
Nature seems asleep or lazy,
Resting peaceful in her might.

Sunsets on the landscape gleaming,
Shadows scarcely seem to move;
While the golden light is streaming
From the fairy dome above.

And we view with dreamy gladness,
From our nook outside the door,
Everything — but voice of sadness
Whispers all will soon be o'er.

We would like to rest forever
With the peaceful summer hours,
Adverse gales disturbing never,
In the bosom of the flowers.

NIGHT BLOOMING CEREUS.

WHAT could have burst upon my raptured sight
So pure and lovely as this flower of night?
Of mould too delicate to stand the ray
Of aught material as the light of day.
But in the air of mystery and shade,
When myriad souls to dream or rest are laid,
All silently (as oft the moon doth rise
Pale and unseen above the darkened skies)
Thy leaves unfold, with perfume fill the air,
A miracle of beauty blooming there —
Plucked from the stalk, at midnight sent to me,
A heavenly messenger it seemed to be.
From its pure depths a spirit did arise,
And shed o'er me the dews of paradise.

THE CALL.

I WILL go and call on the lady,
Although but a stranger here
She sent me a nice invitation
At her last spread to appear.

They say she is wondrously handsome,
Exceedingly graceful, too ;
But should I be caught in the meshes
What could a bachelor do ?

But who cannot withstand temptation
Is good for naught the world knows ;
The evening is cool and refreshing
To take a nice walk — “here goes.”

I stand at the portal already,
I jingle, jingle the bell.
A colored man answers the summons —
“At home ?” (he nods low) very well.

“Please take you this card to the lady,”
Again he bows solemn and low,
Returning, “She’ll see you — this way, sir,”
I follow with dignity slow.

"Mr. ——, I am happy to meet you,"
Advancing, extending hand,
With a grace and a smile so winning
My dignity quite unmanned.

"Be seated"—her tones were low music
That pleasantly rippled on,
Precluding the need of responses
From my usually fluent tongue.

I felt neither shy nor uneasy,
But most delicious content;
To see and to hear left no crevice
To harbor a wish unspent.

Should I dare attempt to describe her
Both words and picture would fail;
For things most exquisite in nature
Will always lose by retail.

The essence, the charm is so subtle
One cannot compass or trace,
At times from its depth will bewilder—
Again, 'tis beauty of face.

I know that her eyes were dark brown ones—
Fairy lakes, limpid and clear;
Within them, not sunlight, but moonlight,
Laughingly there did appear.

Her hair would be called a dark auburn,
With glittering tinge of old gold.
It rippled and waved o'er a forehead
Of high intellectual mould.

Complexion like rich, rosy sunset,
As fadeth daylight from sight,
The carnation dyes softly blending
With vanishing clouds, snow-white.

A face round and smooth as a baby,
Charming the head in its pose,
The figure quite tall and commanding,—
The *whole*, a full-blossomed rose.

Perhaps, after all, 'twas the manner,
So natural, pleasing and sweet.
Uncommon good sense was apparent,
To hear her converse, a treat.

I never would weary to listen—
Never would weary to look;
I know there was ne'er such another
Either in world-life or book.

Her face when I left her did haunt me,
It haunts me still to this day.
O pity me! for she is married,
And all my love thrown away.

HEROISM.

“**A**WAY, for a good time now, coasting!”
They ran with their sleds to the hill,
Their little hearts throbbing with gladness
As only in childhood they will.
These children, the three, were mere infants,
The boys being scarcely ten years,
The youngest, a girl only seven,
But all with stout hearts it appears.

Up, up to the top, and down sliding,
As swift as an engine they go,
The little one, not quite an expert,
Would often roll into the snow;
But pick herself up without whimper,
With no thought of danger or fear—
No lack of a strong resolution,
But lacking a knowledge to steer.

Up and down, and not a bit weary,
If so, neither felt it or knew,
An awful good time they were having,
Determined to carry it through.

Such happy and innocent children !
With faces the picture of health,
The world with all its vast treasures
Gives them the best part of its wealth.

The little girl, somehow or other,
A new course now suddenly took,
And down the steep hill without steering,
Slid into the near running brook.
In the deep, deep water now struggling,
O what earthly power can her save ?
All fearlessly in without waver
Swift plunged the young brother, the brave.

“Stick close to her, Jimmy, I’ll help you !”
Cried out his young comrade of ten,
And in a life venture together
’Gainst death strove the small hero-men.
They strove not in vain, for in safety
They gain now the shore without aid,
And white as the snow was their burden,
Which on it they tenderly laid.

And Jimmy he knelt down beside her,
Where she lay so helpless and pale,
Fear then for the first time came o’er him
And broke forth in sorrowful wail.
But help with his comrade came hastening,
And efforts were prompt to restore,
Their little charge slowly awakened
To life and to gladness once more.

And Jimmy stood watching in silence
Till questioned, he said that he meant —
While his voice was firm and unbroken —
“To go down with her if she went.”

Such deeds stir the hearts of the strongest,
Performed by the strongest of men,—
The risking of life for another
Will rouse e'en the dullest again.
But chords still deeper, more tender,
Are touched till the eyes overflow,
When guileless and innocent children
So plainly the hero-heart show.



THE SCHOOL TEACHER.

“Or jogged in wagon of ancient date,
A sale of his garden ‘sass’ to make.”

THE SCHOOL TEACHER.

I.

THERE dwelt a farmer near the town
Of sturdy limb and face quite brown,

And many wrinkles of care and age
Were stamped upon this title page.

Bound for market many a day
Rode the farmer on load of hay,

Or jogged in wagon of ancient date
A sale of his garden "sass" to make.

He worked quite hard, his good wife, too,
A standing mortgage always due;

And made but little year by year
Beside the interest to clear.

Happy they were while young and strong,
Cheering each other with hope along —

Hope that the future would see the weight
Lifted quite from their small estate.

But most of farmer's gains, we know,
Beyond a living, are few and slow,

And age had taken from them away
Some of the courage of life's young day.

One only child, a daughter fair,
Cheered the home of this honest pair,

Growing like many another flower,
Brightening ever the dully hour.

Learning, they said, if nothing more,
They'd give their child from out their store.

So every day, to time and rule,
Trudged she down to the village school.

Gaining in stature year by year,
As in wisdom and knowledge clear,

She finished with diploma high,
And school-girl days at length were by.

II.

As slowly sank the setting sun,
And labor for the day was done,

The farmer and his good wife sat
Engaged in comfortable chat.

Outside the door, on rustic seat,
The velvet lawn beneath their feet,

With heads both bare, for warm the eve,—
The farmer in his checked-shirt sleeve,

Smoking his pipe, with pause between,
And putting on a look quite keen,

At least *he* thought so, but nature still
Looked out with simple honest will.

Had he possessed a keener mind
That mortgage would not drag behind.

But after whiff of monstrous size,
Rolling and curling towards the skies,

Removing pipe from mouth to hand,
While wisely its contents he scanned,—

“I have been thinking, wife,” said he,
“Of what account can learning be

“Unless it brings some substance in,
An easier living helps to win

“Than drudging on as we have done,
And ending where we first begun.

“Now Susie she has wit and sense,
And as a proper recompense,

“Why can’t she teach the village school,
And all our earnings we can pool,

“And die in comfortable cheer,
Knowing she’ll hold the farm quite clear?”

He said no more, but puffed and blew
The fire within his pipe anew,

And soon the smoke enwreathed again
That honest, unpretentious brain.

The wife in silence mused awhile,
Then looking up with half-way smile —

“Little Susie a teacher make,
Girls to coax, and boys to shake?

“School a play-house would be made
With Susie mistress, I’m afraid.

“If they were stupid and would not learn,
How could her bonny face get stern?

“Genteel and nice I know ’twould be —
Not scrub and rub like you and me,—

“And gain a portion, as you say,
By helping us the mortgage pay.”

But little Susie, what says she,
Now tripping home so merrily

From neighbor's house that stands near by,
With rosy cheeks and sparkling eye?

For she had beauty sweet and rare —
A wealth of rippling, sunny hair,

And winsome ways, devoid of art,
A happy, pure and loving heart.

A favorite with both great and small,
The children loved her, one and all.

“To teach them? she would like it well,
How nice to hear them read and spell!

“With children there was naught to fear.”
To her the path was bright and clear—

The way to govern and to guide
Was but to find the true, right side.

So Susie for the chance applied,
And being proven qualified,

We see her mistress of a school
Subjecting all to law and rule;

But from a knack that few possess
Obeying her did not distress.

The stubborn ones could hardly tell
The reason they did not rebel,

Or why 'twas pleasanter to please
Their little teacher, than to tease.

But so it was, and Susie grew
A teacher prized the village through.

Her earnest work and child-like ways
From old and young both won the praise.

And every day her fresh young face
Was seen in its accustomed place;

And if her mind from thence did range
Through future years, or sigh for change,

The secret thought no one might know —
A sweet content alone did show.

One day 'twas rumored through the town
The absent son of old Squire Brown



THE SCHOOL TEACHER.

"She met a youth, a stranger he,
Who tipped his hat quite gracefully."

Had just returned, in finished style,
From foreign travels, gained meanwhile;

And many a maiden young and fair
Was thinking of the rich man's heir,

And wishing it might be her fate
To win his heart and his estate.

Now Susie had no time to waste
On traveled fops with foreign taste,

And would have judged the tender passion
To be bestowed on belles of fashion.

But yet it chanced one summer day,
Returning home the usual way,

She met a youth, a stranger he,
Who tipped his hat quite gracefully

To her, as slowly he rode by—
A common country courtesy.

And something whispered in the breeze,
"It is the heir from o'er the seas."

And thus she thought, as from her sight
He disappeared, this foreign knight,

"I ne'er a fairer youth have seen."
And he, "By Jove, a May-day queen!"

And beauty's queen she looked indeed,
Her hair in part from ribbon freed

Strayed o'er her cheeks of wild-rose tinge,
Her eyes' bright blue from tangled fringe

Looked out, a mystery of light,
Like violets half veiled by night,

And dimples in unconscious smile
Her cherry lips must needs beguile.

As on she went with buoyant tread,
Thoughts floated through her pretty head

Quite foreign to their usual train —
"To make the path of learning plain."

All this grew dim, as ne'er before,
A wish arose for something more.

A sense of bliss within her soul,
A strength, a power beyond control

Seemed wakened into life, and cast
In shade obscure the prosy past.

That magic dream, the dream of love,
Its charm around her heart had wove,

And pictured for a time to view
A future beautiful and new.

A home of joy was there portrayed
By sweet companionship thus made.

Her pupil's faces blent in one
That rode by her at set of sun.

But standing now inside the door
She smiled at visions gone before,

And wondered that a stronger tide
Had swept her daily thoughts aside,

And looking round her humble cot
Grew calm and settled in her lot.

III.

One morning at her desk she sat
Subtracting this, and adding that,

When at the door a knock was heard,
All listened, but yet no one stirred,

Till Susie quietly arose,
A little startled her repose,

For the committee had been there
Quite lately,—other visits rare.

The door she opened, face to face,
A stranger bowed with smiling grace,

Then stepped inside, with hat in hand
And glancing o'er the youthful band,

“I've come,” with dignity he said,
“To see what progress has been made,

“Since years ago, when small like you,
I puzzled all the school books through,

“Head full of mischief and of fun
From daylight to the set of sun ;

“And only wishing for the day
When lessons could be done away.”

The children simpered, and their eyes
Wide open, looked with great surprise

Upon the stranger, wondering where
He came from, and why came there.

Susie now with a modest grace
Near unto him a chair did place,

And then inside her desk once more
Waited till the remarks were o'er.

They were but brief, and turning then
As often do "committee men"

Unto the teacher, "wished but to say,
She might proceed the usual way."

Now Susie felt a little queer,
For to her mind 'twas very clear

She saw before her the same one
She met one day at set of sun.

But sensibly, and not confused,
Tho' in her heart somewhat amused,

Her pupils through their lessons led,
With cheeks a little brighter red.

The stranger listened with an air
As all engaged in the welfare

Of each, and all, at length he rose,
A smile on all the group bestows.

Expressed himself "much gratified
With their appearance,—they had tried

"The best they could, and that was all
One could expect from great or small."

He thanked the teacher, and a smile
Twinkled around his eyes meanwhile ;

And hoping to call some other day,
Departed, and pursued his way.

Now Susie was not dull or vain,
But to her mind 'twas very plain

The interest in the school was all
Pretence to make a morning call.

Full well she knew that she had not
The handsome face, once met, forgot.

And might not he remember too,
And seek again her face again to view ?

Beside she felt she clearly read
The look of mischief when he said

Good-by to her, that smile betrayed
The little ruse he well had played.

Thus musing was she once again
When wandering homeward, and the train

Of all her thoughts once more did seem,
Lost in a vague, but sweet, love dream.

But yet not long, for Susie thought,
"All this is foolish, and comes to naught."

"He is a seeker but for fun,
And I must labor till work is done."

So from her mind she banished all,
The dreams, the stranger, and the call.

Engaging then in pleasant chat,
And helping her mother in this and that,

For every day little Susie grew
More and more to the aged two.

Wise indeed must a teacher be
Who had succeeded as well as she.

The farmer sought her skillful aid
In reckoning up a sale, or trade,

"It was so easy for her," he said,
No use to puzzle his own old head."

And Susie, the pet, had now become
A teacher at school and teacher at home.

IV.

As weeks from this now rolled away
Unto her school on many a day

The stranger had come, the children all
Had learned to expect the frequent call.

And Susie at once his knock did know,
A little faster her heart would go,

And the light in her eye but for the shade
Of the eyelid's fringe had more betrayed.

The traveled heir with country ease
In the summer days himself to please

Had sought in many ways, until
A sweeter charm allured him still.

Beauty of all degrees he'd seen,
From low to high, peasant to queen,

But little Susie, so sweet and wise,
More than any had charmed his eyes.

With only a present joy in view,
Led by a fancy fresh and new,

Results, thus thought of, if at *all*,
"No harm in making a friendly call."

Now this young heir of old Squire Brown
Had pride of family, handed down

From matrons stiff, and sires of note,
Who fought, who preached, who taught or wrote.

But he himself the thought possessed,
On "entailed laurels" he might rest.

So following on the pleasant bent
With no fixed purpose, no intent,

Save he enjoyed the presence sweet
Of our young teacher, so prompt and neat.

And after school oft-times would he
Walk home with her to the maple tree,

Whose lofty branches shaded well
The modest home where she did dwell.

Fluent of speech he would meanwhile
Most pleasantly the way beguile,

Discoursing much on wonders seen
In foreign countries, where he had been.

And Susie listened with glowing cheek —
Small occasion for her to speak —

She would not interrupt the thread
Of an adventure so neatly said.

She was happy, and scarce knew why —
Always happy when he was by.

And he had found a pleasure rare
In watching a face so joyous and fair.

For pleasure we before have said
Dwelt mostly in his heart and head;

To while away the summer time,
Then seek again some other clime.

A roving nature, tired of place
As of a once attractive face,

No thought had he to settle down, —
No thought to wed had Mr. Brown.

In the dim future, it might be,
Some dame of lofty pedigree

He might, perhaps, conclude to take,
Or rather she, for his own sake.

But Susie wot not of the pride
That lurked beneath the fair outside;

Approval, gladness in his eyes,
Alone she read without disguise.

And never had he come so near
Resigning what he held most dear.

False pride, and liberty to rove,
Well-nigh were sacrificed to love.

But summer now had drifted by,
And from the danger he must fly.

Self always first, with scarce a thought
Of danger to another wrought.

He went away, and Susie still
Toiled on as erst with earnest will.

For *toil* it had at length become,
Labor for love alone was gone.

Her thoughts would wander from her school,
Rebellious, past her power to rule.

The children's movements to control
Were easier far than her own soul.

Familiar tap upon the door
Was listened for, but heard no more;

And fancy roved through walks made dear
By a belovéd presence near.

The voice, that for her ear alone
Discoursed in low delicious tone,

She heard again, and felt that peace
Were lost should it forever cease.

Poor Susie had not known or felt
How deep the wound carelessly dealt,

Till absence showed the fatal dart
The ruling inmate of her heart.

She reasoned with herself and knew
That he but pleasure did pursue.

He left, but as a passing friend
Whose manners please, and there doth end.

Why had she thus allowed to spread
A glamour over heart and head

Created in her foolish brain?
She must and would be free again.

Resolves are easier to make
Ofttimes than keep, and sometimes shake

The vital fabric to its fall,
Within the ruins burying all.

A change o'er little Susie came,
A something one could hardly name.

No more her words and laugh did ring
In music free as bubbling spring ;

Her cheek grew pale, the wild rose tinge
Had faded, and the deep, long fringe —

The pensive light of her eye half hid,
Drooping low from the snowy lid.

Close, close within her own pure breast,
None knew the cause, some might have guessed ;

If so, no scornful smile or jeer
Escaped them : Susie was too dear.

Few things more sadly do we trace
Than sorrow's lines on a bright young face,

And know that a spirit bravely within
Strives in the struggle to conquer, to win.

Long months were passed, and doubtful still
Which would yield, the flesh, or the will ;

But every day little Susie wrought,
Teaching others, while *self* she taught.

V.

Years have passed and our little friend
Still to the school her way doth wend ;

Firm is her step, firm is her face,
The bonny bright look no more we trace ;

The *spinster* teacher is stamped thereon,
The wild rose tinge from her cheek is gone ;

But yet there remains a sweeter charm
That unto itself the heart doth warm.

And never by pupils and neighbors more
Beloved was she in days of yore ;

And many a suitor sought to share
The fate of one so good and fair —

Unmoved, and calm as a summer's day,
Politely she bade them go their way.

But oft a dream of the olden time
Steals o'er her sense like beautiful rhyme,

Enwraps her heart, again doth bring
The life and youth of blossoming spring.

But only a dream she knows full well
Fleeting and vain as a charmed spell.

Yet not to have known, tho' known to lose,
The pain and pleasure she both would choose.

Father and mother many a year
Have slept the sleep that knows no fear ;

But smooth the journey for them was made
Knowing the earthly mortgage paid.

The faithful teacher, faithful friend
Thankful for all that He doth send,

Still to her truthful heart will own
Its inner teaching the hardest known.

Many another like her we see
Toiling ever as faithfully,

Linked to a dream of happiness dead
Till wrinkled the face, and youth is fled.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

THE theme is getting hackneyed,
And yet not understood;
But few will take the trouble
To know what's for their good.

She would not, if requested,
Go to the polls and vote;
Let Harry do the voting—
He is a man of note.

She has no time for trifling,
Her dresses must be planned;
Of what account the quibblings
That agitate the land

Compared to stylish costume,
With soft, infantile ways?
The men dislike strong-minded,
Bold women of these days.

“Let Harry scan the future,
Decide what's best for *me*;
And also for the children,—
More clearly he can see.

"No pleasure is denied me,
He never looks severe
Save when he gets excited,
Defining woman's sphere.

"The world is none the wiser
Since, on that ancient day,
It was decreed that women
Their husbands should obey.

"I sometimes get to thinking:
Were I the first to die,
A second wife, most likely,
Would make the money fly.

"But if I should outlive him
The law would fix *my* claim;
With *him* it would **not** interfere —
But then, no one's to blame.

"If anything should happen,
And we perchance should part:
He then could take the children,
Tho' it should break my heart.

"'Tis wrong to let such fancies
Meander through the brain;
At present I live easy —
To reason is but vain.

"I know my lot is favored
'Bove most of womankind;
'Tis safer not to meddle,
And wisdom to be blind."

So while the yoke is easy,
And burdens they are light,
Few women take the trouble
To try and set things right.

With craft the base of politics,
And honesty forgot,
Our country is in danger,
Uncertain is our lot.

'Tis well there are good workers
In this our common cause :
For times will ne'er grow better
Till women help make laws.

THE WEAVER.

FROM loom to loom with ceaseless tread,
 She goes from morn till eve,
To and fro, with practiced eye,
 Watching the shuttles that weave, weave, weave,
Such wonderful webs with measured speed;
 And her's the guiding hand
To bring them forth in perfect form
 United every strand.
 Weave, weave, weave,
 From morn till eve,
And all her thoughts are wove therein;
 Sad havoc it would make,
If roving thence — forgot the thread,
 Unmended then the break.

A weaver young, but easily taught,
 Careful was she and bright,
And soon like many an older one,
 Turned out the web all right.
She *would* succeed, she *must* succeed,
 Alone in stranger land —
Her only help within herself,
 Health and a willing hand.

Weave, weave, weave,
From morn till eve.
Her face is flushed with heat
And not with a healthful glow.
The air is close, her ears are stunned —
So they were months ago.

The change in her indeed is great
Since first she entered there,
The blooming picture then of health:
With this would ill compare.
A plant of sturdy out-door growth
Within a hot-house placed,
Sooner or later must decline —
Its fair proportions waste.

Weave, weave, weave,
From morn till eve.
But one bright gleam the future holds —
Pay-day will soon come round;
For this she left her native land,
For lack of penny and pound.

She was not at her loom one day —
Another filled her place;
She restless lay upon her bed
With flushed and fevered face.
Her mind it wanders — and again
She treads her native land,
And in the pure and wholesome air
Works with a willing hand.

Weave, weave, weave,
There's no reprieve.
No shuttles half as swift as thought,
From joy to pain now flying;
The broken web she cannot mend,
Poor child! for she is dying.

YOUNG LADY'S SOLILOQUY.

A HANDSOME house—the door bell rings,
Servant answers, and quickly brings
Cards to inmates. Daughter, fair :
“A party? I thought so. What shall I wear?
How had I better dress my hair?
What shall I wear? let me think,
Blue the last time—it shall be pink.
Slippers or boots? slippers are neat,
Show to advantage pretty feet ;
Boots more easy, and never slip
Down at the heel in the ‘Boston dip.’
What kind of a sash? pink or white?
I saw a beauty the other night.
I won’t copy, Oh, no! not I;
What others have, I scorn to buy.
Shopping to-morrow I must go,
Flowers, and ribbon for sash and bow,
Quillings of lace for neck and sleeves,
Tablier bordered with autumn leaves,
Pink silk hose, with gloves more pale,
New frisettes lest my own should fail.
Oh, I have got so much to do!
Hope I’ll live to carry it through ;
But then in the *waltz*, if *he* is there,
For all this labor what shall I care?”

CHEERFULNESS.

HOW brave it makes one! all is right;
And through the storms of howling night,
If one possess
This dauntless trait, there is no fear:
The path through it is all made clear
To cheerfulness.

How welcome ever is the face
Well lighted by this priceless grace!
And we do bless
The charm that doth surround,
Till all forgot a gloom profound
Through cheerfulness.

If all a gift, how can we blame
The many that we here might name
In such distress?
If but a shadow cross their sun,
They are forever more undone—
Blest cheerfulness!

If 'tis acquired, then we may hope
There's help for such, and they may cope,

When cares oppress,
Successfully, if they present
A front which says, "'Tis all well meant,"
In cheerfulness.

'Tis worth a struggle to obtain
O'er wayward moods the guiding rein ;
And happiness,
With help divine, within us dwells —
"He helpeth those who help themselves"
With cheerfulness.

It cannot be a gift of chance
That every virtue doth enhance
Itself by goodness.
It must be pure, the precious stream
That feeds the steady, glorious beam
Of cheerfulness.

But fitful flashes will there be
Till perfect harmony we see
In His greatness,
And learn to take with smiling face
Pleasure and pain in our embrace
And cheerfulness.

THE FISHERMAN'S DREAM.

FORTH from his hut the fisherman went:
His boat lay moored in the bay,
And very near to his door;
Went forth quite free from a discontent —
Under the weather for many a day,
Felt sadly while lying ashore.

From a small window his wife doth peer,
And watching with anxious care
His step, strong only from will;
He would list no word of weakness or fear —
“Out, out he would go in the bracing air,”
Air that his sails will soon fill.

With tackle and net, and sails unfurled,
And in his accustomed place,
He sits a king on his throne;
His boat is his home, his life his world,
Much paler, 'tho' now his sun-burnt face,
And trembling his knees have grown.

Away, away, a freshening breeze
Bears him far distant from land,
But he rests in calm content;

More than content, a delicious ease —
His net lies near to his listless hand,
Till ease with slumber is blent.

Where will he drift? Ah, no one can tell!
The wind is the master now;
The old man doth sleep and dream;
More sound he sleeps as the rocking swell
Raises the stern, and now sinks the prow,
Just like a cradle, we ween.

His head rests easy upon his breast,
His body 'gainst the boat's side;
Again the visions of youth
Are floating round, in loveliness dress'd
Sea nymphs on gold-green waves do ride,
All singing in tones of truth,

And beckoning him, while their starry eyes
Gleam wild with alluring light,
Gleam out from their sun-lit hair;
And down through the waves he plainly descries
Their grottoes glittering with gems so bright,
And all sea wonderments rare.

"I'll not come to your grottoes," he said,
"Sea traps, and shown to decoy,
But in a big ship I'll sail;"
The sea from a child had filled his head,
He once took a long voyage when a boy
Charmed by a sea-faring tale.



THE FISHERMAN'S DREAM.

"His head rests easy upon his breast,
His body 'gainst the boat's side."

From childhood to manhood — (still asleep) —

He now sails on with his bride,
Over the blue dancing wave ;
His heart dances too, with joy doth beat
While his beloved sits by his side,
And he feels both strong and brave.

He calms her fears as the waves run high,
And for land the boat doth steer,
Till reaching his lowly home —
Home where his father did live and die,
But not till his son with pride he did rear
In the same trade as his own.

The thoughts of the old will backward turn
In dreams as in daily life,
More pleasant the ground to tread.
The future presents realities stern,
The present with care forever is rife,
And life's delusions all fled.

O honest fisherman ! dreaming still,
While his boat sails slowly on,
The wind for pilot and guide ;
But visions more glorious his soul doth fill.
Behold ! even now an opening dawn
Appears, and spreads far and wide.

His boat sails now on the purple clouds
Through the sunset glow of even,
Away in the upper air ;

And far above there are shadowy crowds
Waiting, waiting to enter heaven,
Gleaming through portals fair.

O beautiful sail, beautiful breeze!
That upward his boat doth bear
Beyond the sunset of even!
Nearer and nearer the port he sees,
Ah, bliss! it hath entered, entered there,
And both have sailed into heaven.

Wake, O fisherman! quickly thy sails
Furl now! there cometh a gale
Will drive thee roughly ashore—
Ashore, where thy wife thy absence bewails.
See! at her feet a torn, tattered sail;
He lands—but will wake no more!

LITTLE MOLLIE.

HOW cunning she looked in her white night-gown,
Laughing and frolicing up and down;
Her eyes grown black with excitement and fun,
Alternately changing from dance to a run.

Dear little Mollie!

Such a gale, such a gale was ne'er seen before,
Loving eyes watching increased it the more;
A perfect abandon to innocent glee,
Knowing that others were happy as she.

Sweet little Mollie!

Her pink little feet and ankles so bare,
'Twas hard work to track them everywhere;
But nothing I'm sure could e'er be so neat —
What neatness can equal a child's pretty feet?

Neat little Mollie!

Her face was a picture framed in the gold
Of bright gleaming hair that did it enfold;
The rose tint of childhood, with infancy born,
Grown deep as the brighter pink roses of morn.

Rare little Mollie!

Fall back, every one, and yield her the floor,
She needs ev'ry inch and would were there more;
Queen Mab of the hour, Oh, give her full sway!
Completely imbued with the spirit of play.

Gay little Mollie!

Up and down, up and down, now here and now there,
Her antics and freaks with naught can compare;
The mirth she doth cause, the laugh and the shout
Are echoed still louder in wheeling about.

Light little Mollie!

'Tis strange how much life three years may contain
United with beauty in one little frame;
But weary at last she hides her small head
In dear mamma's lap, quite ready for bed.

Tired little Mollie!

Caught up in fond arms with gladness and pride,
And borne to her crib the big bed beside;
The prayers and the kiss, and good night is said,
And still as a mouse lies Mollie in bed.

Sleep, little Mollie!

RED ROSES.

CRIMSON splendor ! I will place thee near,
So near unto my heart
Thy perfect petals, thrown so sweet apart,
Its faintest throb shall hear.

Floral Queen, what power within thee dwells,
Tho' dumb and silent thou,
That all beholding thee in homage bow,
So moved by thy sweet spells.

Oh, whisper of that kingdom, beauty's own !
That fairy wonderland
Where all is fashioned by the magic hand
That placed thee on thy throne.

Queen Rose in the kingdom of roses
Ever wert thou to me ;
An old-fashioned rose they would call thee,
My glory of glories !

What language dost thou understand, sweet ?
For thou art alive all through ;
Converse we'd hold if only one knew,
Rose text repeat, repeat.

No answer but fragrance arising,
Sweet as in youth's spring time ;
But it says, "I give what is mine,
Beauty and sweetness comprising."

'Tis enough, on my heart now repose —
Heart enriched by thy wealth ;
Made happy and pure like thyself,
Rare old primitive rose !

A DREAM.

I CLASPED my darling in my arms once more,
I held her in my lap as heretofore ;
And it did seem
A joy surpassing aught to me ere given,
It filled my soul as it might be in heaven —
'Twas but a dream.

I felt the warmth within her slender frame,
The beating of her heart was just the same,
And love did beam
Clear, as of old, from out her bright blue eye
On me, so happy to each other nigh —
O blissful dream !

Upon her cheek I saw the glow of health,
Her fluffy hair wreathed in its dainty wealth ;
But like a gleam
A sudden sorrow shot into my soul,
Remembrance, fatal, darkened then the whole —
Too changing dream !

Death claimed my darling as he had before,
Forgotten grief again on me did pour
A crushing stream ;
Sobbing I woke, but still would bear the pain
If I could hold my darling once again —
Would ever dream.

“COME UNTO ME, ALL YE WHO LABOR AND
ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL
GIVE YOU REST.”

HOW much of meaning in these soothing words!
So simple, yet so grand! so compassing,
Yet strong! assuring, confident, no taint
Of failure, doubt: a child may understand
The language plain, could we like children come.

But, no! alas, herein the trouble lies!
The mind to some great strait must needs be brought,
Must feel its weakness, want, its limitation,
The impotence of human power to aid;
Vain glory, egotism cast aside,
How transient feel the joys the world can give,
How vain to call its treasures e'er one's own!
To-day to have, to-morrow not to hold.
Observe the same great works go ceaseless on,—
Above, below, around, still everywhere
Go on the same as at creation's dawn:
A dawn that with the aid of inspiration
The mental gaze can but so faintly picture
Back through the shadowy realms of time.
The same machinery, behold, goes on

Without a pause, as then was set in motion
 (Unlike indeed all human handiwork);
 Revolving planets swift and slow as then
 (Science but serving to o'erwhelm the more),
 The darkness beautified by countless stars,
 Twinkling within their dome for ages past;
 Great seas and lakes in constant surges rising,
 The three great kingdoms teeming all with life,
 Harmonious all, silent, or in throes
 That stun intelligence but human —
 Intelligence that seeks and feels a strength
 Far, far beyond its own; seeks it trembling
 O'erwhelmed with fear by power it knows can crush,
 Or with a faith serene, hearing the voice
 Which says so sweetly, "Come ye unto Me."

The want of something unattained doth come
 To ev'ry thinking soul, early or late;
 And so it struggles on, may be confiding.
 But in its own strength, until the storms and shocks
 Of adverse force all powerless show it
 To control.

Why wait till on the sinking ship we stand
 To cast our fate, our lives into His hand?
 When we so early must a power confess
 And He so ready trusting hearts to bless?
 Take Christ at once so fully to the heart
 From His embrace no human power can part;
 Rely on Him, and bravely on through life
 March without fear, through pleasure or through strife;

He will sustain through ev'ry earthly ill
If unto Him we but subject the will.
Be like to Him, as far as frailty may :
No other pattern need we on our way ;
Belief in Him will reconcile the soul
To all the sorrows that may o'er it roll,—
It is a strength the world may not bestow
And only those who trust can ever know.
'Twill calmly take us o'er the unknown stream,
Falling asleep as in some heavenly dream,
Hearing that voice, "Come unto Me and rest,"
Rest in My Father's mansions of the blest."

NIGHT REFLECTIONS.

ERE we our thoughts and frames commit to sleep
Let us the day's past scenes review,
Of motives, acts, a faithful record keep,
Unto ourselves be ever true.
All screens of self deception cast aside —
A just reviewal without cant or pride.

Like pris'ner at the bar the soul arraign
The naked truth alone to hear ;
The soul so wayward, subtle, and so vain
Bring now to full confession clear.
Tried by itself, its secret wrongs confessed,
The judge and jury formed of traits the best.

Each sinful thought or deed bring to the light,
Sift out the evil from the good ;
Holding the balance ever true and right,
So far as can be understood.
Banish the chaff with breath of hate away,
No more to gather on another day.

No surer way a righteous path to tread
Than night reviewal of the day ;
Seeing our *own* than other's faults instead,
With prayer that clear be made the way.
Tho' erring daily, place our standard high,
Repenting nightly, as the days go by.

FANCY.

FANCY, fancy, let me catch thee!
Hold thee while thou sing'st to me,
Sing'st of all thy lovely visions,
Fair creations wrought by thee.

Tell me of the flowers that blossom
In the night time, shut by day;
Waiting cells for dancing fairies,
Dancing 'neath the moon's soft ray.

Of the pale night blooming cereus,
Of the region where they grow;
Opening in the gloom of evening,
White fields waving to and fro—

To and fro, like wings ethereal,
Formed by an æolian breath,
While the world is silent, slumb'ring
In a stillness like to death.

Tell me of the green moss grottoes
In the kingdom of the sea,
Lit with gems of such rich lustre,
Sun or moonlight dim would be.

Bring the mermaids throned or sporting,
Let me hear their siren strain,
See their strange, bewildering beauty,
Mid the foam-wreaths of the main.

Take me thence to mountain summits
Bent o'er valleys rich below,
Watered by the sparkling cascades,
Singing joyous as they go.

Glowing landscapes all around us,
Beautified in endless make
By the pools that lie beneath them,
Mirrored in each tiny lake.

To those islands left to nature,
Reigning o'er primeval wealth,
Over sweets whose rich luxuriance
Waft full argosies of health.

Birds with ev'ry shade of plumage,
Flowers of an eternal bloom,
Ever fresh, yet ever changing,
Old for new ones making room.

Show to me the fairest women,
Fairest children, bravest men ;
Ev'ry style of perfect moulding
Seen or known to mortal ken.

Golden tresses, or like midnight,
Brown or chestnut, waved or straight,
Let them float o'er forms all perfect,
Faces, each some mortal's fate.

Children, cherubs as we picture,
Wanting nothing save the wings,
Dimples set in down or satin,
Faces framed in shimmering rings.

Men with brows of marble polish,
Stamp of inspiration there,—
Genius tuned to rhythmic measure,
For mankind revealings rare.

Men with brows all stern and massive,
Cheeks of bronzed or swarthy hue,
Grand in their great strength and purpose—
Some vast schemes to carry through.

Show me of thy beauteous visions,
Till I surfeit, sigh for change;
Then to dismal swamps miasmic
Plunge me in a headlong range.

Where the flowers yield poisoned vapor,
Freckled in the noonday sun,
Dried by witches, dark as Endor,
For their diabolic fun.

Take me to the caves of ocean,
Where the old sea serpents sleep,
Throwing off their slimy coating,
While their young a watchfire keep,—

Keep with lurid eyes of demons,
As their hideous coils unfold
Lightning like, unconscious victims
In their fatal clasp to hold.

Hear the bellow of the sea horse
'Bove the wave's most angry roar!
While all other horrid monsters
Through the depths in myriads pour.

To the craggy mountain summits
Where the thund'ring torrents pour,
Fearful chasms all around us—
One wrong step, and all is o'er.

Fogs arising thick and blinding,
Chaos dark alone doth reign,
Move not, trembling in the silence,
Till the heights are clear again.

To the isles where fierce siroccos
Wither herbage, life and limb,
And the all-surrounding vapors
Help to hold the foul breath in.

Where the birds are fierce and hungry,
And the venomed reptiles crawl;
Flowers of their own poison dying,
Still replaced with new ones all.

Bring the ugly women, hideous,
Matted locks, unkempt and coarse;
But with faces not more startling
Than their husky voices, hoarse.

Homely children, wily visaged,
Both by nature and by sin;
Calloused hands and pinched blue faces—
Let them all be gathered in.

Men with brows all low and knotty,
Stamped with sordid love of gain—
Yellow-hued, and wolfish features,
All unmoved by others' pain.

When beset with danger shrinking,
Cowards, save to weak and low,
Ill-directed, base-born natures
Plainly on their faces show.

I would see the blackness, fairness
Of thy vast and wondrous train,
Take, O all-bewitching goddess!
Take possession of my brain.

Lead me where thou wilt, I'll follow —
A companion make of me;
Take my thoughts, if worth the taking,
Make them but a part of thee.

A SOLILOQUY.

I THOUGHT it was a slight — intended, too;
What difference would it make if that I knew?
When next we met I'd pass her lightly by,
Like any other gilded butterfly.

I thought she had a soul beneath the zone
Sparkling with jewels lately made her own;
But souls are rare that fortune's smiles do seek
And leave as found in independence meek.

The other day she met me with a smile,
And walking, pleasantly conversed meanwhile;
Both then were poor, on equal footing met,
May be I now am crossed from out her set.

I shall not pine, or mope, far less complain,
Rich, if but owning a deserved good name.
Honesty of purpose, self-respect and health
I would not barter now for all her wealth.

The freaks of fortune often bring to light
So much of dross deep hidden from our sight —
A sad discovery in the female heart
Which we have deemed an angel home in part.

It shakes one's faith almost in heaven itself
To see rare beauty so beguiled by pelf ;
But I no heart will ever call mine own
That hath not fortune's smiles and frowns well known,

Passing the ordeal with a soul as true
As if the changing tide it never knew ;
But finding not, I still will trust and love
My ideal one, all earthly shocks above.

MEMORIAL.

DEAD! did they say? Who says that she is dead?
She is but feigning death;
How still she lies, fairer than e'er before!
No longer hold thy breath.

And look! they move! the vestments on her breast.
Oh, no, she is not dead!
The half-shut lid cannot conceal the light,
Her lips retain their red.

The lustrous hair is full of life, it stirs!
O wind, to mock — deceive!
Breathe back the breath so subt'ly stol'n away,
Breathe gently, wind, Oh, breathe!

No vital power, the vestments only move,
And now the clustering hair;
O cruel death! O false deceiving wind!
O fairest of the fair!

FAREWELL TO SUMMER.

FAREWELL, Summer, beautiful queen;
Too short, but sweet, thy reign hath been,
Thy gifts most freely bestowing;
Earth is smiling in sweet content,
Decked in charms so lavishly lent,
Thy royal banqueting showing.

Garlanded landscapes, tempting shade,
Arbors for lovers charmingly made,
And musical fountains in play;
Wild woods fragrant, lake lying near,
The wafting of voices happy and clear,
With breath of the sweet meadow hay.

Glorious sunsets, twilights long,
Filled with insects' harmonious song,
Enticing the feeblest outside;
Humming birds poised on floral wealth,
Workmen enjoying their ease and health,
All nature so peaceful beside.

Hark! 'tis a cricket, warning shrill,
Twilight is dying on western hill;
Bright Summer, alas, dying too!
How we shall miss thee, beauteous queen!
None more generous ever hath been,
Our thanks, and a mournful adieu.

WINDS.

THEY whisper us gently, they lull us to sleep —
To sleep or to dream matters not ;
They fan us, they soothe us, so mild is their breath,
Rough corners of life all forgot.
Half sleeping, half waking, they bear us away
To islands so tranquil and bright ;
The senses are fed, the soul is refreshed,
As heaven and earth do unite.

Like kisses of infants they light on the cheek,
In perfume surpassing the rose ;
They whisper of dingles to mortals unknown,
Where fairy life blossoms and grows.
And far-away music in waves they bring near,
Now rising, now falling in swell,
— O ye winds, gentle winds, mysterious winds !
Such beautiful stories to tell !

The sighing of lovers, the transports subdued,
The flutter of hearts at the altar,
In snatches are heard through the branches and leaves
Of the trees, as the winds play or falter.

They reach to the embers of hope in the heart,
And fan to a crimson red flame ;
All scrolled in the future are visions fulfilled,
And float on the height of their fame.

O sweet-lulling winds, deceitfully calm !
Your mood is bewitching, we own ;
But changeful are ye, your argosies dreams,
Nor much sooner given than flown.
A tempest is hidden behind the silk sails,
Your forces are all mustered there,
Dark squadrons are rising on every side,
And frown on the soft, peaceful air.

And thought—all alertness, anxiety, fear,
Are roused by the strong, surging blast,
That whistles and howls of a region laid waste,
Where thy hurricane breath hath passed.
O winds, lulling winds, fearful winds, full of moods !
Ye seem to our natures akin ;
But grant but a boon when we yield to your sway,
Wake only the angel within.

THE PAINTER.

THE great invisible artist
Forgets not our much favored land,
And painteth each landscape in beauty,
In beauty so matchless and grand.

How brilliant and warm are the colors,
So shaming our rarest of art ;
Whole forests in blood-reddened costume,
Like warriors ready to start.

And mingled the rich dyes of amber,
E'en paling the sun's golden beams ;
We'll gather a harvest of beauty,
Of beauty and glorious dreams.

The soft tints, so cunningly blending,
Are always effective and true ;
We worship the Master of nature,
With thankfulness freighted anew.

A lesson divine from the painter
Thus yearly his creatures are taught,
Removing vain man's emulation,
In looking on what He has wrought.

Thus showing His goodness and mercy,
In never forgetting the feast
Spread out for each weak, wicked mortal —
Our artist, our maker, our priest.

WHITE CLOUDS.

SAIL on, sail on, ye beautiful clouds !
Not beauty alone is thine :
Ye lift up the soul and carry it on
To harmony's realms divine.

How can we grovel, and sigh, and groan,
While viewing such glories above ?
No room should have either the heart or soul
For aught but o'erflowing love.

Love to the Giver who spreads o'er all
This vast mysterious dome ;
Amid whose circling, brilliant worlds
We look for a future home.

Roll on, roll on, ye billows of foam !
Roll on through the azure blue ;
A peaceful calm and a holy trust
Are carried along with you.

BLACK CLOUDS.

BLACK clouds, black clouds are gathering round,
Portending a conflict near ;
The dome is filled with a darkened mass —
The thunderbolt lieth here.

Gather no more, gather no more,
Thy grandeur is awful to see ;
And we dread the crash and the fearful burst
Of heaven's artillery.

Tumult arises within the breast
In viewing the frowns above ;
And we anxiously wait for the gloom to pass,
Revealing the smile of love.

Like emblems of wrath ye seem, black clouds,
O blessed the conscience clear !
Roll away, roll away, black clouds, black clouds !
'Tis better to love than to fear.

CRIME.

SUNLIGHT flooded the silent room,
Hunting out ev'ry corner of gloom,
Shone on the tumbled bed;
Shone on a tumbled mass on the floor,
Lying near the close-shut door;
Shone on a pool of red.

Shone on a ghastly upturned face,
Left so rigid from death's embrace.
Oh, horrible deed of night!
What fiend lay lurking in thy shade,
Grasping the hilt of a keen-edged blade,
To rob and to murder outright?

Stolen the booty, stolen life;
Taken both without lengthened strife,
Judging from signs around;
Casement open: through this he crept,
Stabbed the sleeper (if that he slept),
Stifled all noise and sound.

Stole away ere the morning sun
Shone on the deed in darkness done,
Or on the gathering throng.
“A thousand pounds for the murderer’s head,”
On posted placards before them spread,
Read as they hurried along.

THE OLD HOUSE.

STRANGE feet traverse the time-worn floors,
Strange hands open familiar doors,
Strange eyes gaze on the naked walls,
Strange tones answer to friendly calls;
Strange the life that dwelleth therein,
Old house deserted by former kin.
Dear, dear old home, hallowed by love!
Entering now the thought will rove
Back to the past, the past brought near,
Near and more near while standing here.
Seek thee a nook wherein to rest,
Seek for the one in youth loved best,
Far from strange illegitimate sound,
Better silence complete, profound;
Move from the inmates' wondering gaze
To the old spare room of former days;
There, on the seats of ancient style,
Sit thee down and muse for awhile.

Forms now people the room once more,
Forms and faces so loved of yore;
Voices speak in the old-time tone,
No longer art thou alone, alone.

Back into childhood borne again,
Sisters and brothers do come as then,
Whispering schemes of frolic and fun,
Ready to join in jump or run ;
And a joyous thrill, like as of yore,
Comes back, and thou art a child once more.

Linger here, so sweet the moments seem,
Too sweet to last, O transient, fading dream !
A mother's voice, "Dear children, have a care,"
Is heard upon the fresh and balmy air ;
A mother's face, fairer than aught beside,
Slowly within the shadowy mist doth hide.
So memory revels in the by-gone hours,
Bringing to view the weeds as well as flowers ;
Revolving years, inwrought with joy and pain,
In ashes sunk, she brings to light again.
This haunted room sharpens the blunted steel,
Tho' all be lost, not lost the power to feel.

Another picture, seen through falling tears,
As new-found childhood slowly disappears,
Presents itself. A happy crowd is there,
And in their midst a youth and maiden fair,
Receiving blessings, smiles and words of cheer,
And kisses for the blushing bride so dear,
Upon whose rounded cheek the rosy red
Of youth and new-born happiness is shed.

But as the hour of parting draweth near,
From the home circle, quick the sigh and tear
Spring from the heart, and broken words do fall
From trembling lips, embracing one and all.
Till *his* fond arms to waiting coach convey,
And both from brimful eyes are borne away.
But, ah! those tears will ever longer flow
From eyes thus left behind than those that go;
And hearts will longer sigh that miss the face
Mid all reminding in their usual place.
The spirit gone, with them so closely wove,
All, all seems dead, but quickened more our love!

Fast, fast the pictures throng before the eye;
Bridals and deaths in turn go rolling by,
Until the dead out-number far the few
Of living ones presented to the view.
The honored heads are seen again laid low,
And after them, so many loved ones go.
The home, that ne'er again appeared the same
To the lone dwellers that did there remain,
Is shown, as when the last of the long race
Departed thence to seek some other place;
And the old sorrow rushes o'er the soul
With torrent force, as then, beyond control,
Till intervening years like dreams arise,
And veil the gloomy picture from the eyes.

Two lives we here do seem to have passed through,
Impressions stronger in the old than new;

But never, in the long, long years we've known,
Have memory's scenes so vividly been shown
As in this room, where haunting shades still dwell,
More faithful than who left, but loved as well.
They left, new homes to seek far, far away,
And ne'er returning till this distant day ;
But though these hours may prove the last spent here,
No banquet could the world present so dear ;
No other place could clear the mental eye,
And show the loved and lost still hovering nigh.

The veil concealing raised as ne'er before,
No other spot such scenes could picture o'er ;
Farewell, blessed haunt, dear shades, dear past, dear all !
While from the heart this earnest prayer doth fall :
“ While on this earth, and in whatever land,
May this loved house on this same spot still stand,
That when its natal children hither stray
The chance be theirs to dream like as to-day.”

MY VALENTINE.

MY love is in the mystic land,
My dear love mine ;
But yet he sent me in a dream
A sweet, sweet valentine.

My own dear love I never see
Save in a dream ;
And then his words I understand
Just what they mean.

Last night a radiance pale and bright
Streamed from above,
Filling my soul with ecstasy —
The light of love.

And then a voice, like music, grand,
But soft, did say :
“ Read what is written on the scroll,
‘ ’Tis Love’s own day.’ ”

“ The spirits, all invisible,
Do congregate
This happy day, when loving hearts
Do choose a mate.

“The little birds, with cooing song,
Do partners find,
And youths’ and maidens’ hopeful vows
In favors bind.

“My mate was chosen long ago :
The same sweet hour
When soul to soul were clearly shown
By love’s own power.

“No earthly cares can vex my love :
Her happiness
Lies in a world that’s all her own —
’Bove earthiness.

“Let this, my Queen, this lover’s dawn,
Our pledge to be :
‘That I am thine, and thou art mine,
Eternally.’”

SUMMER TWILIGHT.

O TWILIGHT sweet ! O fragrant breath !
O peaceful hour after the throbbing day !
How grateful art thou to the human sense,
Bringing the rest to help o'er life's rough way.

Unseen thou stealest in thy misty car,
Dispensing over earth a pensive grace,
While tender flowers their leaflets fold to sleep,
And folded hands tired, active ones replace.

As falls thy softening shades and cooling dew,
On grateful nature, beautiful withal,
The mind a soothing influence receives ;
To gentle musing, reverie doth fall.

And pleasing, hopeful pictures let them be,
The golden sunbeams linger on the green,
No art can imitate their shadowy light,
Through them a heavenly hope be felt and seen.

Lift up the eyes unto the glowing west,
And heaven *itself* seems opened to the view ;
No sunset through past ages just the same,
Like dreams of future glory, ever new.

And as the splendor fades to sober hues,
And deeper shades and shadows close around,
Pray for an inner light the soul to guide,
"Where peace that passeth human ken" is found.

So when our earthly days draw near a close,
Our final twilight be with rapture blest,
Through which the opening bars of light disclose
To us a sweet and an eternal rest.

ON THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

Dying — Dead!

A nation mourns; as hope reluctant
Slowly disappears behind the clouds
Of dark despair.

For weeks and months the myriad pulse
Has beat in sympathy for him,
The patient one, untimely
And so wickedly laid low.

And must he die? hearts echo to the news
But lately through the air by lightning borne;
Around his bed in silent awe they stood,
Awaiting death, his friends at Elberon.

Sustain, O God! the wife who never failed
To cheer and help the loved to struggle on.
For more than human aid she now requires
Since the dark shadow falls on Elberon.

Hark! toll, ye bells! the mournful sound is meet
To typify a nation's woe and groan;
Yet through our loss, remember *his* the gain,
The heavenward spirit fled from Elberon.

WAIL.

MOVE, O move, my own, my beautiful !
 In silence dread, dear one, no longer lie ;
 My life I'd give if thou would'st only lift
 The waxen lid from off thy deep blue eye.

Pale, parted lips, whereon a smile doth rest,
 Speak, speak again ! my hope of heaven I'd give
 To hear from them one dear, familiar word,
 And know that thou dost live again, dost live.

No word, no look ! O terrible suspense !
 I shall go mad if thou unheeding lie ;
 Thy sweet, divining spirit heretofore
 Failed ne'er from me to list the faintest sigh.

O see me, hear me, heed me, darling mine !
 I *cannot* lose thee, fearful, crushing dread ;
 Thus will I hold thee, hold thee evermore,
 Mine and mine *only* art thou, living, dead !

THE OLD YEAR.

I THANK thee, old year, for the pleasures
Brought and bestowed upon me ;
But had they been smaller, thy favors,
I would not ungrateful be ;
Like as a friend familiar and dear
I'd have thee to tarry still longer, Old Year.

The joys it is well to remember,
Sorrows more wise to forget ;
For nothing is gained by lamenting,
And no habit worse than to fret.
Cherish the blossoms and sprinkle with dew,
Bury forever the branches of yew.

Thy skies have been azure and golden,
The earth in beauty arrayed ;
With fruits for the mind and the body
In tempting profusion displayed ;
But "loving and loved," the gems most dear
Of any that fell from thy crown, "Old Year."

Let's cherish the loved and the loving
Until the heart doth o'erflow,
Love for the Maker and Ruler,
Love for the friend and the foe,
Love for the old year, welcome the new,
Thy mission is ended: Old Year, adieu!

MY ANGEL.

IN the misty vale I wandered alone,
While the daylight shone but dimly,
And the frowning heads of the tall spruce trees
Through their ghostly robes looked grimly.
The world so dreary, so dreary,
And I aweary, aweary.

The twitter of birds and the insects' hum,
And plash of the rolling river :
All had taken a mournful tone,
Bringing a dread and a shiver.
The world so dreary, so dreary,
And I aweary, aweary.

Sorrow had swooped like a bird of prey
Down on each thought and feeling ;
Crushed I sank on the moistened ground,
Oblivion o'er me stealing.
The world so dreary, so dreary,
And I aweary, aweary.

O magical trance ! what visions it brought
Of peace and happiness reigning ;
'Tis heaven, I thought, my loved one is here,
Ended all doubt and complaining.
No more the world so dreary,
No more aweary, aweary.

Close by my side my darling one knelt,
In her own dear voice said, "Mother ;"
I could only look unspeakable joy
And love surpassing all other.
No more the world so dreary,
No more aweary, aweary.

She smoothed my brow with her small, soft hand,
And said, while sweetly caressing,
"Weep not, grieve not, dear mother again,
I'll prove thy strength and thy blessing."
No more the world so dreary,
No more aweary, aweary.

"I have not left thee, my own mother dear,
But only from sight withdrawn ;
Ever around thee, I wait but to lead
Through death to the opening dawn."
No more the world so dreary,
No more aweary, aweary.

Waking, I rose with hope and a strength,
Since then deserting me never ;
My darling I feel is always so near,
United on earth and forever.
No more the world so dreary,
No more aweary, aweary.



THAT OWL.

"Than the top of that high-backed chair."

THAT OWL.

PET owl, of what are you thinking?
 You look most portentous and wise,
 So slowly and solemnly blinking
 Those great and oracular eyes.

What's hidden within that cat's forehead
 I fain would unravel and know;
 Whence springeth the weird fascination
 Thy wonderful visage doth show.

Strange bird, in the dark of the evening
 You look like some demon or seer,
 Peering far into the future,
 To bring frightful visions more near.

On the wing of a ruined old abbey
 In the midnight and ghost-haunted air
 For thee would seem far more fitting
 Than the top of that high-backed chair.

I can't say I like you this even,
 You're trying your tricks upon me;
 Oh no, mister owl, I'm not frightened!
 But a little bit nervous, you see.

The ominous blinks you are making
Are worthy some despot in state ;
With eyes now balefully glaring
Now shut like the dread book of fate.

Here, Jane, take this imp of a fellow
And carry him out of my sight ;
He's raised such a mental commotion
I sha'n't sleep a wink all this night.



HALF A CENTURY AGO.

“ ‘Grandmother, tell me a story,’ she said,
Sitting down close at her feet.”

HALF A CENTURY AGO.

“GRANDMOTHER, tell me a story,” she said,
 Sitting down close at her feet ;
 “Your stories are better than any I’ve read —
 Just one, little Grandmother, sweet.”

The beautiful suppliant face might win
 Any favor at Grandma’s command ;
 A pause in the knitting, and smile to begin,
 And here is the tale second-hand :

Half a century ago

I knew a maiden sweet and fair,
 Called the beauty of the village ;
 With a dainty, winsome air,
 And a voice for speech or singing
 One would never tire to hear,
 Bringing happiness and cheer.
 Ev’ry care behind one flinging.

Half a century ago

In young New England, people few
 Made the most of time, nor dallied
 With the work they had to do ;

Late and early working, training
Up the younger to the same ;
Idle ones alone to blame,
Patience none for those complaining.

Half a century ago
My little maiden none could beat
Carding, weaving, or in spinning,
Hands so skillful, small and neat.
Harmless coquetry in dressing
Natural to her as to breathe,
Homely fabrics she would wreath
Into beauty all confessing.

Half a century ago
Little time for trifling was there
In love matters : quick decision ;
Two or three strings then were rare.
She of lovers had a plenty,
Who their love had never told,
She was friendly, but so cold,
Was my belle not hardly twenty.

Half a century ago
Ambition urged men then as now,
To the West their thoughts were turning,
Mingled with the marriage vow ;
Marriage with our little maiden —
One on this had set his mind,
And to him she proved more kind,
Gave a heart with love full laden.

Half a century ago

As fond were mothers, love as deep
For their daughters, if not showing ;
It might slumber, but not sleep.
Oh, the pain beyond expression !
Stirring deepest depths of woe,
She would leave her, she would go
Far away, with new possession.

Half a century ago

She left her mother, home and all ;
In those days, for distant country
Chance for travel then was small.
Could you then have seen that mother,
Scarce a word she ever spoke,
But we knew her heart was broke.
Working while she strove to smother

Half a century ago

Each show of weakness, surge of pain,
Deepened by the sure conviction
Her idol ne'er to see again.
Years went by, and firm and silent
Moved she on in duty's ways,
As the fashion in those days,
We trust, on future hope reliant.

Half a century ago,

One day, cheerless, fitful, drear,
Brought a letter from the office,
Only means the news to hear.

Prisoned there, a deadly quiver
Lay in ambush. As she read,
From the date, a week then — “dead,”
O'er her crept a strange, cold shiver.

Half a century ago
And she staggered, groaned and fell
Heavily upon the floor ;
Flesh and will, and all were conquered,
Conquered thus, to rise no more.
Like the oak, not bent, but broken
By the light'ning's fatal shock,
That will tremble, sway and rock,
Falling, die — no other token.

“What a sad story, grandmother,” she said,
“I hope it was not all true ;”
“Ah, yes ! my dear child,” the grandmother said,
“The mother was great aunt to you.”

THE BIRTHDAY.

IS'T a child ? with moods of April,
Changeful, tender, smiles and tears?

Child whose days are but the present,

Days that are so many years ?

Flitting fairy, thine the birthday

Singled out from old Time's roll ?

That we bring the festive offerings

Of the garden and the soul ?

Is't a maiden ? blushing, dreaming

Of her heart's ideal love ?

Dreaming of a future holding

All that makes a heaven above ?

Life a vista strewn with roses

Where she hopes to walk alway ?

Nothing sweeter could we proffer,

If it *were* her own birthday.

Is't a matron ? loving, anxious

For her children, great and small ?

She the centre of her household,

Guide and counsellor for all ?

Looking backward, forward, hoping
Life be spared for their dear sake,
Till at least no longer needed,
Strong life's journey each to take.

Not for *these* we here do gather ;
But a peace almost divine
Draws us hither, bids us enter,
Fills us with a hope sublime.
Thought of her a joy imparteth,
Pleasant, soothing, 'tho away ;
We have felt it more than ever,
Knowing it her *own* birthday.

Rising with a smile, she greets us,
While her heart is in her hand ;
And we feel a benediction
Resting on our little band.
Crown of white and wavy glory
Partly shades her high, white brow,
And her eyes of fourscore brightness,
Have not lost their lustre now.

Lost their lustre? Nay, the youngest
Of the party she to-night ;
Gracious, kind, no one forgetting,
Life's first aim, with her, the *right*.
Bless her, bless her, and all like her !
What more beautiful to see
Than old age of childlike freshness,
Born of faith's sweet potency.

Faith that sees a "silver lining"

In the darkest clouds that lower;

Faith that follows its believings,

Far as lies within its power.

Pray we all for grace to follow

In her footsteps on life's way,

That to each and all the future

Bring as sweet, as fair birthday.

UNSELFISHNESS.

THERE is no purer joy than conscious aid
To some one needful in the flesh or mind;
'Tho fled for aye, not lost the day we feel,
With such a sweet remembrance left behind.

Could we our selfish aims in part subdue,
And think of other's comfort as our own,
How quickly would we find ourselves repaid
In fruits to generous natures only known.

A daily sacrifice for some one's weal
Prevents the noble traits from narrowing down,
Or dying out, as time wears on apace,
And gains from broad humanity renown.

The miser hoarding up his gold for naught,
Less pitiful appears than barren souls
That know no feeling save for cherished selves,
No matter o'er whose head misfortune rolls.

A cheerful face, kind words and helping hands,
The greatest blessing one can own or give;
Earth's gilded charms no peace can ere impart
Like *this*, for *others* as *ourselves* to live.

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